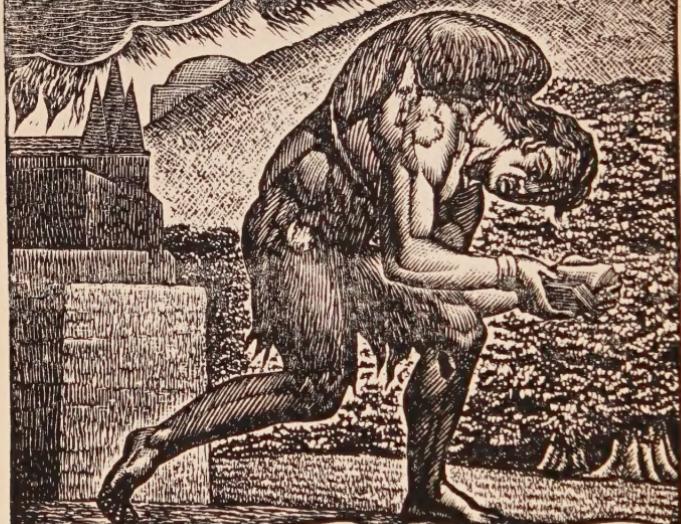




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HOW CAMEST THOU BY  
THY BURDEN AT FIRST?

"BY READING THIS  
BOOK IN MY HAND"

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**RELIGIOUS DRAMAS**

**1924**



DA

# RELIGIOUS DRAMAS

## 1924

SELECTED BY  
THE COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS DRAMA  
OF THE  
FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE  
CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AMERICA

THE CENTURY CO.  
NEW YORK & LONDON

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Printed in U. S. A.

*"The play's the thing  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king."*

HAMLET, Act II, Sc. 2.

THE COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS DRAMA  
OF THE  
EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES  
OF CHRIST IN AMERICA

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## INTRODUCTION

THE growing interest in Religious Drama has expressed itself in increasing demands from churches and communities for plays and pageants suitable for amateur production in churches and parish houses. It is significant that this demand comes not so much from those seeking entertainment only, as from those interested in religious education and from young people's groups organized for some educational purpose.

In response to this demand and at the request of a number of organizations, the Educational Committee of the Federal Council of Churches has appointed a Committee on Religious Drama. The task of the Committee is "to evaluate religious dramatic material already created; to stimulate the creation of new material where needed; to set standards for production, and to encourage the use of the dramatic method in religious education."

The plays that are contained in this volume represent our first attempt to evaluate the religious dramas which have been available for church production during the past few years. These plays, pageants and episodes have been selected from literally hundreds that have been classed as religious dramas.

We present our selections with diffidence, for we are conscious of many weaknesses and frequent failings to attain a high standard of art. We have considered scores of manuscripts written by devout and sincere persons who had something to say and who wanted to say it in dramatic form although they were evidently entirely unacquainted with the simplest requirements of stage production. Most of such plays were guiltless of any plot or characterization or emotional content. We found that the vast majority of religious dramas now available depend for their interest upon some miracle or magic. In very few of them is there any portrayal of character, and the dearth of religious plays of ethical and social import is nothing short of amazing. However, we have done our work with considerable care and believe that pastors, directors of religious education, and

other church workers will find the plays included in this volume material of genuine value for church production.

The plays have been selected with regard to religious message, dramatic technique, literary quality, and educational merit. With these standards in mind we have endeavored to select plays of three main types: First, Biblical dramas and episodes; second, fellowship plays and pageants, centering around Christian community building both at home and abroad; and, third, extra-Biblical plays of the individual spiritual life.

We hope that this book will be the first in a series of annual volumes of religious dramas which will be standard collections to which religious leaders will turn, instead of wading through a numberless collection of pamphlets and manuscripts.

Our gratitude goes out to Mr. Theodore Ballou Hinckley, Miss Katherine Jewell Everts, Mrs. Elizabeth P. Hunt, and Miss Rosamond Kimball, who constituted our Reading Committee and gave many hours to an appraisal of the huge stack of manuscripts from which these plays have finally been selected.

We wish to acknowledge, too, the kindness and courtesy of the various publishers of the plays in consenting to their inclusion in this collection: The Pilgrim Press for "The Rock"; Samuel French for "The Resurrection"; The Abingdon Press for "The Seeker"; The Missionary Education Movement for "Larola"; The Woman's Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church for "The Good Samaritan"; The Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work for "The Friend of all Men"; The American Bible Society for "The Pilgrim and the Book"; The Stage Guild for "The Dust of the Road"; The Century Co. for "The Crusade of the Children"; and Rev. Phillips E. Osgood for "A Sinner Beloved."

Finally, it should be emphasized that actual production should not be attempted from the texts as included here. In every instance the text is complete but, because of the limitations of space, we have omitted the various instructions for stage production. Those who desire to produce these plays should secure the original editions from the respective publishers.

THE COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS DRAMA.

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PART I  
BIBLICAL PLAYS

THE ROCK  
A SINNER BELOVED

THE GOOD SAMARITAN  
THE RESURRECTION



## THE ROCK \*

BY

MARY P. HAMLIN

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## CHARACTERS

SIMON, a fisherman  
ADINA, his wife  
DEBORAH, her mother  
UCAL, her uncle  
MARY OF MAGDALA

Servant to Magdala

PANDIRA, a Greek  
TITUS, a Roman officer  
AGUR, a physician  
Servant to Ucal  
Servant to Agur

# THE ROCK

## ACT ONE

*Courtyard in the House of Simon.*

The floor is of flagstones. Upstage, L, is a rude gate leading to the street. L, center, is an olive tree, spreading and old. About the trunk are built some rough stone steps where one may sit. Against the wall R, goes up a rude staircase to rooms above. The under part of staircase is a rude stone arch. At foot of stairs extreme R, a door leads into house. In the wall, going up the stairway, are deep slits forming narrow barred windows. On the stairway stand a few copper jars and other antique and curiously shaped utensils. Along the wall, L, runs a rough wooden rack in which are six water jars of dull red pottery.

As the curtain goes up, enter ADINA by the gate upstage L. She is a pretty, slender young Hebrew girl with the face and carriage of a child. She wears the white head-dress, or veil, of the Jewish woman, over which is a long mantle of sand-color with a wide border of deep blue, edged with fringe. About her forehead is a band made of beads. She wears sandals and anklets of glass. Her dress is pretty and gay but does not suggest elegance. She carries a water-jar on her head. She crosses with the sturdy step of youth, but shows that the jar is heavy. She starts to ascend stairway. Enter, through door R, SIMON. He is young, alert, athletic and very handsome. He wears the short undergarment of the Jew with his breeches tucked up, or "girt," showing a long bare leg. On his feet are sandals. He carries a great fish-net made of cords. His manner is gay and his walk vigorous. His whole bearing is one of impetuosity and enthusiasm.

SIMON (*Looking up at ADINA*) Little wife, how many more jars must thou fetch?

ADINA (*Pointing to jars in rack*) Six more, thou seest, my Simon.

SIMON (*Frowning*) Bah! That I had slaves to do this work for thee, Adina.

ADINA (*Standing with jar poised on head and laughing*) Oh, I mind it not. No slave women have ever borne *my* water-jars from the well. (*Her face becomes anxious*) Thou art not going in the boat today? Thou wast fishing all the night.

SIMON: Aye, and caught nothing. (*He sighs*) No, we will wash the nets today and perchance cast from the shore. This one needs mending.

ADINA (*Hurrying up the stairway*) I will help thee. Let me set down my jar.

(SIMON stands looking lovingly after her. She places jar carefully on floor at top of stairs and then comes running lightly down)

SIMON (*Holding out his arms to her*) Thou art all fair, my love. There is no spot in thee.

ADINA (*Stopping on next to bottom step and placing right hand on forehead*) O my husband, with my head I worship, (*fingers on lip*) with my lips I honor thee, and (*hand on heart*) with my heart I love thee. (*She speaks with grave dignity, then dances laughingly into his arms like a happy child. SIMON kisses her on head and cheeks, then they kneel together and begin to untangle and tie the cords of the net*)

SIMON: Little dove, thou art very precious to me.

ADINA (*Adoring him*) And thou to me, my husband, thou art so brave.

(SIMON throws back his shoulder in proud assent, then his shoulders slump forward and he begins to work again, frowning)

SIMON: Brave? Bah! To let a little thing like thou art, and of a noble house, bear water from the public well like a slave girl! O Adina, how I long to be able to place thee where thy birth entitles thee to be, to have slave women to wait upon thee, to have jewels, real jewels, not those glass things, about thy ankles —those *little* ankles of thine. (*He stoops and takes her foot in his hand*) "How beautiful are thy feet in sandals, O prince's daughter!" (*He is about to kiss her ankles*)

ADINA (*Snatching back her feet with a laugh*) Thou shalt not kiss Adina's feet. Thou art my lord and master, Simon, and I am thy slave.

SIMON (*Looking at her gravely*) Thou art my wife and thou art of royal lineage.

ADINA (*Sighing impatiently and tying knots vigorously*) Aye, so my mother says, but poverty is the only lineage I have ever known, and I tell thee, Simon, it is a blessed thing for me and my mother that we have two strong fishermen like thee and the good Andrew to stand between us and hunger. (*She nods her little head wisely*)

SIMON: Yet thou art of the house of—

ADINA (*Quickly*) I am of the house of Simon, my husband. (*She thrusts her face up at him saucily and he kisses her*)

SIMON: Thy mother wearies her that thou must carry a water-jar upon thy head.

ADINA: My mother remembers the house of Eleazar, her father, but I have never known aught but the house of poverty, and, as for the water, I love the public well, for there I first saw thee, my Simon.

SIMON: Ah! How we used to whisper there in the twilight.

ADINA: Dost remember the night thou madest me give thee my water-jar to carry? (*She rocks back and forth on her ankles, laughing*)

SIMON: It was dark.

ADINA: Aye, but if any one had *seen* thee! A man carrying a water-jar upon his head! (*She laughs teasingly*) Oh, how strange and funny thou didst look!

SIMON (*Gravely*) It was my love for thee. I was mad and reckless with love.

ADINA: Thou must have been.

SIMON (*Tenderly*) And so am I yet. If thou dost say the word, I will carry thy jars this morning, and I care not who sees me. (*He speaks with a fine reckless daring and starts up as if to get jars*)

ADINA (*Pushing him down by shoulder and speaking in shocked voice*) Simon! Dost think I would let thee?

SIMON (*Head back*) I would do even that for thee, Adina.

ADINA: I love thee for it, my Simon, but I would rather die than have thee do it. What would men say?

SIMON (*Moved*) I care not what men say. I love thee, Adina, I love thee.

ADINA: My Simon! Oh, but thou art brave. It was *that* made me love thee, and, oh, Simon, how hard it was for me to keep the love out of my eyes when my mother spake to me of making a contract with thy father for our marriage.

SIMON (*Smiling*) It was a sore trial to thy good mother when my father asked thy hand for *me* and not, as she had hoped, for his first-born, Andrew.

ADINA (*Working fast*) Ah, our good Andrew! I love him dearly—as a sister.

SIMON: And he loves his little sister and we both love thy lady-mother, but we be but common fisher-folk.

ADINA: Simon, my mother must never suspect that we had spoken together before we were wedded. It would break her heart, but—oh, my husband, I loved thee of my own fancy like a Greek girl.

SIMON: Truly the poor have some freedom that the rich may not share. I would not give our secret meetings by Gennesaret for all the slaves that money would surround thee with.

ADINA: Nor I. I believe I should hate the secluded life that would be mine if we were rich, Simon. Behind the lattice, where my mother would have me, should I ever have heard Jesus of Nazareth speak?

SIMON: Aye, that is worth something! One would give much to hear the Teacher, yet I could wish for more money. (*He sighs and shifts his shoulders*) Little wife, it is weary work fishing the long night through and catching nothing.

ADINA (*Cheerily*) Aye, but sometimes the catch is good, and when it is, thou art clever at the selling, Simon.

SIMON: Oh, I can *sell*. It is a gift. Andrew hath it not, yet he is ever more patient at the fishing than I. I weary of the silence and the sea. Adina, I tell thee, I feel within me the power to make men buy what *I* would sell. I know not what it is, but I can sway a man to do my will. I hate the slowness and the loneliness of the fisherman's life. I long to be in the throng of things here in this great city of Capernaum on the Roman roads where all the world goes by.

ADINA (*Practically*) Thou dost sell thy fish in the market-place.

SIMON: Aye, but I fret at the prices they pay us fisher-folk. We toil in the heat of noonday and in the long dark night, yet it is the man who dries our fish and sells to the caravans from Egypt and Damascus and Persia that gains wealth by our labor.

ADINA: Some day thou shalt be a merchant with thine own driers and *thou* shalt buy from other fishers and shalt sell to all the

earth as it passes through our city. (*She speaks with the calm confidence of the unimaginative*)

SIMON (*With the look of the dreamer in his kindled eye*) Dost truly believe that thy Simon shall ever do this, little dove?

ADINA: I know thou wilt do it. Thou art brave and thou art clever. All that is needed is a start. (*She switches the net about capably*)

SIMON (*Letting the net slip from his fingers*) Aye, but the start! Where shall I find money to start? Never more than enough for the day's needs! Oh, how I long for a chance, *ever* so small a chance! Adina, I know I could make a merchant. (*He springs to his feet as if the belief were too great to bear sitting*)

ADINA (*Mending*) I know thou couldst, my Simon.

SIMON (*Gazing into space, his face alight*) Oft in the night, out on the lake in the silence and the darkness, I see myself a leader of men, a great merchant with many men in my hire—busy, active—with money to make my fisheries ever greater, and to buy *thee* litters and slaves and jewels. Always I am in the stream of life, active, alert, powerful, but (*He looks gravely at ADINA*) ever just, just to the men who labor for me, Adina.

ADINA (*Screwing lips as she ties a firm knot*) Who does the fishing if thou art ever in the market-place?

SIMON: Why, Andrew! We should be partners always and I should do the selling and Andrew would direct the fishing. His work would ever be upon the sea and mine—(*His face glows*) in the city, among men whom I should control.

ADINA (*Like a child who brags*) My uncle Ucal is a merchant.

SIMON: Thy mother hath told me of him. He hath booths in the Temple at Jerusalem and selleth to the pilgrims.

ADINA (*Working*) He is a mighty man of wealth, they say, but it does us no good.

SIMON (*Kneeling to the work again*) Jerusalem is a long way off.

ADINA: Twice my mother hath heard through travelers from Jerusalem that my uncle hath in mind a journey to Capernaum.

SIMON: I should like really to *know* a merchant—a great merchant like thy mother's brother.

ADINA: Perhaps he will come to see us one day.

SIMON: He will not like thy being married to a fisherman, Adina.

ADINA (*With spirit*) Well, *I* like it. If his desire was for a better alliance why did he not arrange it?

SIMON: He will complain that thy mother did not consult him.

ADINA: How could she get word to him? We have never had money to fit out a caravan to send messages, and thou knowest my age, Simon. It were a shame for my mother to allow me to remain longer unwed.

SIMON: If he come and speak to thee of a grand alliance, wilt thou have regrets, my little dove?

ADINA: *Simon!* (*She stoops and covers his hands with kisses*) Thou knowest I love thee only. It was not *I* who sighed for riches. *I* do not fear poverty. (*She ties the last knot with decision*)

SIMON (*Taking the net, rising and helping her to her feet*) Nor *I*, if thou be by my side. (*He gathers up the net and starts up-stage, then turns*) It is not so much *wealth* that I long for as freedom—freedom to work out the plans and ideas that are ever boiling within me. (*He sighs deeply*)

ADINA (*Taking a jar from the rack*) Ah, freedom! What is freedom?

SIMON (*Striding to her and laying his hands on her shoulders he looks into her upturned face*) Freedom is the chance to use the power that leaps within thy heart. Freedom is to be able to do the work thou longest to do, the work thou *knowest* thou art fitted to do.

(*He flings the great net over his shoulder and sighs*) Always to do something else! To toil and weary and never to do the thing thou *canst* do, never do the thing thou *wantest* to do! That is slavery. Surely, Adina, there is no freedom there.

ADINA (*Jar poised on shoulder*) I heard him say the truth makes free. (*Wistfully*) What did he mean?

SIMON: I did not hear him speak of freedom, but I tell thee, Adina, it is since I have known him and have listened to his talks that I have felt the power so strong within me to *do* things—to conquer—to overcome.

ADINA: Aye, I know. It is a strange new life and courage he puts into thee.

SIMON: Or *draws out of thee*. Which is it?

ADINA: I do not know. It is wonderful. No one has ever spoken as he speaks.

SIMON: No one. Farewell, my sweet one. (*He embraces her*)

ADINA: Jehovah bless and prosper thee, my husband.

(SIMON goes out gate with net over shoulder. ADINA stands looking after him a little sadly. Enter, down stairway, DEBORAH. She is a sweet-looking woman, delicate and refined and somewhat worn looking)

DEBORAH: Hast been to the well, my daughter?

ADINA (*Turning with a quick, cheerful smile*) Once, mother. I tarried to help Simon with the net. I will fetch the other jars now.

DEBORAH: We shall need many for the purification.

(ADINA turns a scowling, rebellious little face front. It is the first time that a frown has been seen upon her dear little face. For a moment she looks like a naughty child, then her face relaxes and she speaks gently)

ADINA: I know.

DEBORAH: Didst see any one at the well, child?

ADINA: It was early, but the slaves of Magdala were there.

DEBORAH (*Shocked*) Oh! Thou didst not speak with them, Adina?

ADINA (*By the gate*) Why no, I did not, mother, because I knew thou wouldest not have me but wherefore should I *not* speak to them?

DEBORAH: Mary of Magdala is an outcast.

ADINA: That I know, mother, yet her slaves may be chaste women. Can they help being her slaves?

DEBORAH (*Sighing deeply*) That the daughter of my father's house should mingle with slaves at a public well!

ADINA (*With a shrug*) I will get the water for the purification, mother.

(DEBORAH turns and plods wearily up stairway.

ADINA swings gate open and is stopped by a male servant who enters)

SERVANT (*Haughtily*) Is this the house of Andrew and Simon, the sons of John?

ADINA (*Standing very straight with jar on head*) It is their house.

SERVANT (*Turning and bowing very low to some one outside*) This is the house, my lord.

(Enter, through gate, UCAL. He is dressed with great elegance. His tallith has the sacred fringe of great length and is embroidered heavily with gold thread. He is a man in middle life with a gray beard. He is dignified and substantial in appearance and speaks with a pleasant, authoritative intonation)

UCAL: I am Ucal of Jerusalem, the brother of Deborah. Summon thy mistress.

ADINA (*Setting her jar upon the floor and speaking with quiet dignity*) Thou art exceedingly welcome to our humble dwelling and to eat our bread and salt. (*UCAL turns to look at her in surprise*) I am Adina, thy sister Deborah's daughter and the wife of Simon, the son of John. (*Her girlish pride is so delightfully funny that UCAL smiles*)

UCAL (*Trying to look grave*) Peace to this house. I thought thee a slave girl.

DEBORAH (*Running down stairway*) Ucal!

UCAL (*Turning*) Deborah! The Lord prosper thee.

DEBORAH (*Bowing and placing hand on forehead*) With my head I worship, (*finger on lip*) with my lips I honor thee, (*hand on heart*) with my heart I love thee.

(*UCAL goes to her and kisses her upon the forehead*)

ADINA (*With quiet dignity*) I beg thee, uncle, that thou wilt comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread. My husband is from the house, but I pray that thou wilt ennable us by thy presence. There are straw and provender for thy asses, and there are both bread and wine for thee and thy servants. (*Her head up*) There is no want of anything.

UCAL (*Looking kindly at her*) So thou art the little Adina? Why didst thou have a water-jar upon thy head?

ADINA (*With a trace of defiance*) I was about to go to the well.

UCAL (*Frowning*) Thou to fetch water? Why dost thou not send thy servant?

ADINA: We be fisher-folk, my uncle, and have no servant. (*She crosses and goes into house R*)

UCAL (*Looking after her with concern on face and then turning to DEBORAH*) Is this indeed true, Deborah?

DEBORAH (*Bowing*) It is true, my brother. (*She lifts her head*) Yet though we be poor folk yet should we love to acquaint thee with our bread and salt.

UCAL (*With grave courtesy*) I shall be ennobled by the acceptance of thy bread and salt.

(DEBORAH spreads a straw mat upon floor R center, and UCAL seats himself, squatting on his feet. Enter, ADINA, carrying an earthen bowl which she places on the floor in front of UCAL. The women kneel behind him. ADINA hands DEBORAH a small round piece of bread, or sop, which DEBORAH ceremoniously hands to UCAL who dips it in the bowl and scoops something from the contents into his mouth, eating the sop)

UCAL (*Continues*) There is bread and salt between us. Peace to this house. (*He rises and pushes the bowl from him*) (DEBORAH and ADINA rise and ADINA takes bowl and carries into house R) It grieves me, my sister, to know of thy condition. Thy husband did offend me when he left the blessed mountains of Judea to mingle his fortunes with the heathen here in Galilee.

DEBORAH (*Sighing as she remembers*) I know. (*Head lifted proudly*) But if Jehovah had spared my Ophni, the little Adina would not now be the wife of a fisherman.

UCAL: I reproach me, Deborah, that this should have happened through my neglect. It was the remembrance of the damsel that brought me hither. It had occurred to me that the time for her betrothal must be approaching, but I did not dream that the time for the nuptials was at hand.

DEBORAH: She is sixteen.

UCAL: I come too late. How time has flown! (*He crosses and seats himself on top stone about olive tree. DEBORAH seats herself at his feet. ADINA enters and stands R, listening*) On my journey hither, I tarried the night at the house of my old friend Paphus, the son of Jehudah, at Magdala.

DEBORAH: How bears he the desertion of Mary Magdala, his wife?

UCAL: Paphus is a proud man, in some ways a hard man, Deborah. We spake not of her. I knew it was a painful subject, yet I can-

not but feel that this sorrow is a judgment of Jehovah upon Paphus.

DEBORAH: How so? Paphus is a Hebrew of the Hebrews and a mighty man of wealth.

UCAL: But ever too greedy of riches. In his desire to advance himself in the treasure of earth he did not hesitate to open his house to Greeks and to the Roman officers who throng this Capernaum and the fortress of the Roman governor at Tiberias.

DEBORAH: It was a Greek poet by the name of Pandira that seduced her. They live together here in Capernaum, and she consorts with all the greatest of the Roman officials, going about blazing with jewels, with her litters and her slaves, a shame and a menace to every virtuous damsel of the town.

UCAL (*With a reminiscent sigh*) Ah, she was a garden for beauty! If Paphus had stayed in Jerusalem, shut in by Mount Sion, in the seclusion of the holy city, he might have kept her for himself. Paphus should have tarried in his own land as should Ophni, thy husband. (*He frowns disapprovingly down at DEBORAH*) When I emerged from the fastness of the mountains of Judea and came upon the Via Maris, that mighty Roman road with its caravans from the ends of the earth, and saw here in Capernaum the throngs of Egyptians and Romans and Persians and men from Damascus, suddenly there came upon me a great fear for thee, my sister, and the young damsel, and I hasted me with reproaches that so long I had left thee in this heathen city.

DEBORAH (*Quietly*) We love Capernaum, Ucal, and Adina's husband is a Hebrew, a virtuous man and gifted above his station and calling.

UCAL: So I heard from Paphus. He told me the young man, Simon, hath a quick wit and is clever with his tongue, but he said that the elder brother was the steadier.

DEBORAH: Aye, that is true, yet doth my heart cleave to the young man Simon, my son-in-law, with a great cleavage.

UCAL (*With courtesy*) My heart burns within me to know the young man.

ADINA (*Crossing*) He is by the lake of Gennesaret casting the net. I will get me to the lake and summon him. (*She starts*)

UCAL (*Frowning*) Nay. I like it not that a damsel of our house should run about the town. Stay, child. We will await his coming.

(ADINA makes a little face front but seats herself upon the floor L)

DEBORAH: What spake Paphus of, if he told thee not of Magdala?

UCAL: Of a mighty magician who is setting men's tongues wagging hereabouts.

DEBORAH: Aye, Jesus, the son of Joseph.

UCAL: That was the name. Hast heard of him?

ADINA (*Hugging her knees and speaking like a bragging child*) Aye, Uncle Ucal, we know him. He is wonderful.

UCAL (*Frowning*) Thou dost know him? How shouldst thou, a virtuous damsel, know a juggler?

ADINA (*Sitting up*) My uncle, I am the wife of a poor man and I go freely about the streets and into the market-place. With the poor, even the virtuous damsels have freedom. But this Jesus is not a common juggler. He is an Israelite and a teacher of the law.

UCAL: An Israelite? Where from?

ADINA (*Rocking and hugging knees*) Nazareth.

UCAL (*Amused and condescending*) So? What does he teach?

ADINA: He tells us about Jehovah.

UCAL (*Shocked*) Jehovah? What can he know about Jehovah? Has he studied with the scholars?

ADINA: Nay, my uncle, but *he knows*. I cannot tell thee how.

UCAL (*With a tolerant smile*) From Nazareth, thou sayest? What does he tell thee of Jehovah?

ADINA: He says that he is a messenger of Jehovah and that if we take heed to his message we shall be free.

UCAL: Free? Why, we be sons of Abraham and have never been in bondage to any man!

ADINA: *He* says we are in bondage.

UCAL (*Sternly*) To the Romans?

ADINA: Nay—to all sorts of foolish customs like the ceremonial washings of copper dishes and the setting aside of the tenth part of every bit of caraway seed and spice that we use in the cooking. He says that *men* have loaded us down with these burdens in our household tasks, and that Jehovah does not care one bit about them.

UCAL (*Springing to his feet and snatching a small knife from his girdle*) This is blasphemy.

ADINA (*Springing up and laying her hand on his arm*) Nay, uncle, stay thy hand. Do not rend thy garments. I meant no blasphemy and thy garments are so beautiful. (*Her hand slips down stroking his tallith with delight at its softness and richness. Her under lip is caught between her teeth as she looks up into his face excited by the touch of such richness*)

UCAL (*Looking at the knife sternly yet reluctantly*) Thou knowest that the law requires that an Israelite shall rend his garments if blasphemy be spoken in his presence.

ADINA (*Letting his fringe fall through her fingers with a shudder of delight*) I know, uncle. I have been brought up in the faith.

I know that thou carryest that knife for that very purpose.  
*(She is bragging a bit of her knowledge)*

UCAL (*Kindly*) Then thou art not all heathen?

ADINA (*With charming dignity*) Nay, uncle, I know and respect the law of our fathers. Well do I know that it is required of thee that thou cut through all thy garments down to the one next the skin, if thou hear one blaspheme, and I know that the rent must be an handbreadth (*She holds up her little hand*) in length and it must be from above downward toward the fringe, but on no account must thou cut the sacred fringe. (*She is a little set up at knowing so much*)

UCAL (*Looking at knife*) I see thou hast been taught.

DEBORAH: Put up thy knife, Ucal. The damsel meant no blasphemy.

ADINA (*Touching his tallith wistfully*) And thy tallith is so wondrous lovely, so heavy with broidery. It may well be that Jehovah takes no pleasure in seeing it spoilt. It were pity to mar the work. Perchance Jesus is right about freedom.

UCAL (*Raising his knife threateningly*) Shall I hear thee prate of freedom like a Greek girl and *not* rend my garments? I tell thee, child, that Jehovah is terrible in his might to avenge himself and drive out of his kingdom all those who dare to blaspheme his name.

ADINA: I know, I know, uncle, but put up thy knife. It is not for a woman to question such things, (*wistfully*) yet the Teacher said the kingdom of Jehovah is within us.

UCAL (*Waving his knife*) What gibberish is this? Jehovah is in the heaven of heavens! Jehovah is King.

ADINA (*Hastily*) Yes, yes, so he said, he said a king. Put up thy knife, my uncle. I meant no harm. It were pity to cut thy clothing for the words of an ignorant girl and the mending would take so long. You know we have no slaves to do fine needlework.

UCAL (*Replacing knife in girdle*) Aye, and I brought no needle-women in my train. (*He turns sternly to DEBORAH*) All this comes, Deborah, of letting the damsel stray about this heathen city at will. A Hebrew maid should be behind her lattice. I shall look into this matter of the Nazarene. Paphus spake of him, but I did not dream that the fellow presumed to be a teacher. We shall soon see what the rulers of the synagogue have to say about him. They will know if he be of the faith.

(*Suddenly loud voices and gay laughter are heard outside gate. ADINA springs up in happy excitement. The gate is flung open and a SERVANT enters dressed showily and gorgeously*)

SERVANT: My mistress, Mary of Magdala, seeks admittance.

UCAL (*Sternly*) She may not enter here.

(Enter through gate, MARY OF MAGDALA. *She is radiantly beautiful, tall and stately with a mature and striking beauty in contrast to the round, childlike sweetness of ADINA. She wears a flame-colored headdress blazing with jewels, and heavy with embroidery. About her forehead is a band of costly jewels, and she wears anklets of jewels. Her sandals are embroidered and bejeweled. Her bearing is free and confident without being undignified*)

MAGDALA: What is this I hear? Who says that Magdala may not enter this house? There hath been bread and salt between us.

DEBORAH: Aye, it is true, Ucal. We may not refuse her.

MAGDALA: *Ucal!!* Is it thou? The old friend of my old husband, Paphus! (*She laughs recklessly*) Many's the time that the compact of bread and salt hath been kept by us. (*She turns to gate and waves an invitation*) Come in. Come in. We are welcome. (*She laughs in enjoyment of the torture she is inflicting*)

(Enter PANDIRA, a handsome, slender Greek, gracefully and beautifully dressed in the Greek fashion.)

*Enter TITUS, a Roman officer wearing the short coat of mail about the body, the short breeches and high-laced sandals. On his head is a round helmet of bronze and silver. The manner of both men is haughty and slightly insolent)*

DEBORAH (*With quiet dignity*) Mary of Magdala, whom seekest thou?

MAGDALA (*Finger lightly lifting the chin of PANDIRA*) This is Pandira, the Greek lad, who is my friend, Deborah—and this—*(She points her elbow saucily at TITUS, who smiles at her in delighted infatuation)* is Titus, a mighty Roman of the household of the august Herod. Be it known to thee that our governor is giving a feast to his officers and would provide amusement for them. He has heard of thy friend the magician and has for a long time been desirous of seeing some wonder performed by him. Therefore has he sent Titus to seek him out and fetch him to the palace that he may show his jugglery at the dinner. I told Titus that ye of this household would know the man's whereabouts.

ADINA (*Standing up straight and speaking quietly*) Jesus would not do that.

UCAL: Get thee behind thy lattice, girl. Thou shalt not stand there to be stared at by these men.

*(ADINA looks for an instant rebellious but, seeing the stern look on UCAL's face, she turns reluctantly and goes R with a lingering step)*

TITUS (*To MAGDALA, insolently*) See if the wench knows where the fellow is.

MAGDALA (*For the first time speaking softly*) Dost know where he is, little Adina?

ADINA (*Coming back quickly and looking at MAGDALA with something like affection*) Nay, Magdala, I have not seen him for a day or two, but I know he will never do jugglery for Herod.

TITUS (*Haughtily*) What? A peasant refuse to appear at the palace of Tiberius when he is summoned? Why, it would be the making of him.

UCAL (*To DEBORAH*) Dost know where the fellow is?

DEBORAH: Nay, Ucal, I have never seen him.

UCAL (*Respectfully to TITUS*) Nor I, sir. If we can serve Prince Herod in this, it will do us much honor. It may be that the son-in-law of my sister can find the man for thee.

TITUS: Where does the magician live?

ADINA: Here in Capernaum, though I know not where. My husband knoweth, for he hath been at his house.

TITUS (*Turning on his heel*) Tell thy husband to fetch me word. Meantime we will seek him. (*He looks at MAGDALA*) Come. (*He goes out gate*)

(*PANDIRA starts to follow, then sees that MAGDALA is not following. During the last few moments she has been wandering about the rough stones of the arch and the copper utensils as if renewing her acquaintance with a Hebrew dwelling*)

PANDIRA (*Sharply*) Magdala. (*MAGDALA looks at him with an insolently questioning look. She raises her eyebrows but does not speak*) Come.

MAGDALA (*With haughty insolence*) Nay, but it pleases me to tarry here for a time.

PANDIRA (*Looking quickly and anxiously out gate*) Magdala! Titus waits for thee.

MAGDALA: Thou mayest tell that haughty Roman, I will not come.

PANDIRA (*Sharply*) Magdala, thou shalt not scorn Titus. Come.

MAGDALA (*Stamping her foot and flying into a rage*) I tell thee it pleases me to remain. I tell thee I will not go.

(PANDIRA starts as if to seize her wrist, but UCAL steps quietly between them)

UCAL (With stern dignity) Cease. Thou shalt not brawl here in this decent house before virtuous women. (To PANDIRA) I tell thee, begone. (To MAGDALA) There may have been bread and salt between thee, Mary of Magdala, and this house, but there is no such pact with thy Greek lover and I command thee to depart. (He points sternly to gate)

MAGDALA (Suddenly cool) Pandira, dost thou hear? Get thee gone. I choose to tarry.

PANDIRA (With pleading yet exasperated gesture) Magdala! Titus—— (UCAL points sternly and PANDIRA, casting a malignant look at MAGDALA, clutching his fist as if to strangle her, goes slowly out)

MAGDALA (Lightly touching the stones of arch in stairway) It is long since I have been within the walls of a virtuous Hebrew dwelling. (She sighs)

UCAL (Sternly) Thou well knowest, Mary of Magdala, that thou hast forfeited thy right to virtuous entertainment. Hidden by that flaming headdress of thine, thy long black hair hangs loose, unbound by the priest as a symbol that thou art forever outcast from the house of Israel.

MAGDALA (Deliberately pulling aside her veil and taking a strand of her long hair in her hand and looking at it with interest) Aye. (She continues to look at it for a moment then turns and speaks quietly to the women) Shall I go, Deborah, Adina?

UCAL (Pointing) Go.

ADINA (With a sharp cry) Nay, uncle, but she shall not go. (She runs to him and puts her hand on his arm) Thou dost not know, but oft when she was yet the wife of Paphus and I was a hungry little child, she fed me with choice food. I was cold and she took me into her house and put warm clothes upon me.

DEBORAH (*Sadly*) Aye, brother, oft in the past hath she thus ministered to our needs.

UCAL (*Bowing his head*) I am covered with shame that my neglect should have suffered this to be. Thou hast earned thy right to tarry, woman.

MAGDALA (*Flinging up her head*) Yet why should I care to stay? *I*, who am free of kings' palaces! *I*, who have cast off the slavery of a Hebrew woman's life with its endless tithing of all that comes into the household, its endless washing of this and that copper pot! (*ADINA takes a few fascinated steps toward her, listening eagerly*)

MAGDALA (*Continuing*) I go and come as I please and the men of the household of Cæsar are happy if they find favor in my sight. Tonight, if thy friend the magician do his wonders before Prince Herod, *I* shall be there in the arms of Titus, the Commander of the Horse.

UCAL: Hush! Thou shalt not babble of thy lewdness here.

MAGDALA: Nay, good Ucal, I did not mean to speak thus, but I marveled at the sudden longing that came over me to touch again the familiar household things (*She looks wistfully at DEBORAH and ADINA*) and to speak again with a woman of my own race. (*She sighs but quickly recovers herself and flings up her head*) Ho! I am free! I have thrown off the yoke of bondage. What is there in this poor dwelling that I should tarry here? I am *free, free, free*.

ADINA (*Coming close and looking up wistfully into her face*) Art thou indeed free, Magdala?

MAGDALA: Why, yes, child. Look at me. Am I not? I go and come how and where I please. I have slaves and jewels—

ADANA: Yet thy—thy—the Greek, Pandira, didst speak to thee harshly as my Simon never speaks to me.

MAGDALA (*With a sudden slumping of her proud carriage*) Thou art right, child, I am not free. I am his slave. Bah! How I loathe him! (*She shudders, burying her head in her hands, but quickly recovers and lifts head proudly*) Yet would I not return to the old slavery of the Hebrew wife. We are all slaves of one kind or another. There is no freedom.

ADINA: The Nazarene said the *truth* makes free.

MAGDALA (*With sudden interest*) Aye, he said that the day I heard him. I forced my way through the crowd and questioned him about it.

ADINA: Oh, I have longed to ask his meaning. Did he answer thee?

MAGDALA: Aye, he answered me.

UCAL (*With curling lip*) This teacher talked with *thee*?

MAGDALA: Aye.

ADINA: What said he to thee about freedom?

MAGDALA: He said if I would listen to his message, I should know the truth and the truth would make me free. I told him I was the freest woman in Capernaum. The soldier who was with me laughed and we went our way, but I have *thought* of his words since.

UCAL: If the man were a reputable teacher, he would not have spoken thus publicly with a woman of thy standing, Mary of Magdala.

ADINA: He is but newly come to Capernaum. He did not know Magdala. Men say he is a prophet.

UCAL: Nay, child, a prophet would have known what manner of woman it was that spake to him.

(Enter, through gate, SIMON. His face glows with joy and there is a strange, wild excitement and look of power about him. He rushes downstage and stands with head thrown back, a look of ecstasy on his uplifted face)

SIMON: Adina! Mother! He has called me. The Master has called me.

(ADINA and DEBORAH press forward on either side, excited by his excitement. UCAL and MAGDALA stand a little back and UCAL is seen to study SIMON with interest. SIMON is so full of his news that he fails to notice UCAL)

ADINA: Simon?

SIMON: It was by the lake, Adina. We were washing our nets, Andrew and I, weary with our profitless night. Thou knowest, Adina, how despair was in my heart for the poor catch and the waste of my days.

ADINA (*Breathless*) Aye, aye.

SIMON: I began to cast the net, though I had no hope. That is the terrible thing about having but one boat. When we are away in the middle of the sea the fish come by the shore, as thou knowest they do come here in Gennesaret, and are to be had for the casting; and yet, when we return empty from the deep fishing, then there are no longer fish by the shore. (ADINA nods in sympathy) But I cast the net and then I saw him. There was a great crowd following him and pressing upon him and he asked me to let him get into our boat and push out a little way from the shore so that the people should not crush him. We rowed him out and he spake to them from the boat. Oh, Adina, that I could but tell thee *how* he spake! It was so wondrous beautiful what he said. I tell thee, little wife, he spake as never man spake. And when he finished he turned and thanked me for the use of the boat and told me to cast my net onto the right side. I did as he bade and in an instant the net was so full of fish that we were nearly overturned. Andrew and I shouted and the sons of Zebedee came to our rescue. It was all the four of us could do to get the fish into the two boats. Both were filled and, in the end, the great net brake.

ADINA (*Clapping her hands*) Simon!

SIMON (*Smiling at her*) Oh, we had fish to sell today, my Adina, but that was not all. I was terrified and threw myself at his feet crying, "Master, depart from me, for I am a sinful man!" Then, O little dove, then he looked at me as no man has ever looked—as if he saw the inmost longing of my soul, and he said: "From today, thou shalt catch men. Follow me." and, oh, Adina, there welled up within me a great tide of joy and power and I knew, at last, I was *free*.

(*For an instant SIMON and ADINA stand gazing into one another's eyes oblivious of everything except the great thing that has happened. All feel the tension.*

DEBORAH breaks it.)

DEBORAH: Simon, thou dost not see. My brother Ucal is here.

SIMON (*Turning bewildered, but quickly coming to himself and stretching out arms in oriental welcome*) Thou art very welcome to my humble dwelling, O uncle of my wife. My house is ennobled of thy presence. (*They kiss one another on both cheeks*) I beg thee that thou wilt excuse my inhospitable conduct, but this thing that hath happened is beyond all hope and experience of my life.

UCAL: I am ennobled of thy greeting, Simon, son of John, and I will hear further of this thy strange adventure.

SIMON: Come, seat thyself, good uncle. (*He points to steps about tree. UCAL seats himself at top, holds out hand to DEBORAH, who mounts and sits beside him. SIMON stretches out hand to MAGDALA*) Wilt thou be seated, Magdala? (*He indicates lower step*)

MAGDALA: Nay, Simon, I will sit here. (*She squats on floor L*) I too would hear of thy adventure.

SIMON: Adina? (*He indicates steps. She looks, hesitates, then goes and sits on floor by MAGDALA. From time to time she reaches out a hand and touches MAGDALA's rich clothing like a child who loves beauty. SIMON stands with one foot resting on lowest step*)

UCAL: What thinkest thou the man meant by telling thee that thou shouldst catch men?

SIMON: Sir, I believe the Teacher knew the desire that has long burned like a fierce flame within my breast.

UCAL (*Kindly*) What desire is that, Simon?

SIMON: It is a desire that I have ever kept hidden in my heart, O Ucal, a desire that only Adina, my wife, hath ever heard pass my lips.

UCAL: Tell me of thy desire.

SIMON: Thou art a mighty man of wealth, O Ucal, and it is not for such as thou art to understand the binding cords of poverty nor the hopeless drudgery of the fisherman's life. Through the long nights we toil and in the burning heat of day, and other men make profit by our labor.

UCAL: How is that? Dost thou not sell thy fish in the open market?

SIMON: Aye, but to whom? To the merchants who dry them and in turn sell them at a great advance in price to the caravans who pass Capernaum over the roads of the Romans to the uttermost bounds of the kingdoms of earth.

UCAL: Ah, I see! And thou wouldst be a drier of fish and a great merchant?

SIMON: Aye, sir.

UCAL: There is naught in that desire that should shame thee to tell the whole world. Such an ambition doth but ennable thee, Simon. I am a merchant and it hath ever been an honorable calling among our people.

SIMON: And yet it is so, O Ucal, that a man ever shames himself to tell abroad the desire that he sees no hope of ever seeing fulfilled.

UCAL: So now thou thinkest thy wish is about to be carried out? Dost think this Nazarene will set thee up in business?

SIMON: Nay, sir, thou dost not understand. Ever since boyhood, I have felt within me the gift to stir men's hearts, and often as a lad the others would gather about me to listen to my words. And now, in the selling, always I get the highest price, for men take heed to me and I move them. It was what I knew I had within me which made me long to be where men are, where I could sway them to my will. Oh, the plans, the plans, the plans that I have had!

UCAL (*Watching him with kindly interest*) Tell me thy plans, Simon.

SIMON (*Recalling his dreams, his face glowing*) As the caravans come into Capernaum, O, Ucal, they are often spent with the long journey and sometimes entirely without food if they have not provisioned themselves sufficiently, or if the fierce heat of the desert has spoiled what they have. Oft they have been days without anything to eat and then they buy with eagerness our fresh fish, but, when they set forth again on their journey, they buy only the dried fish that will keep sweet in the desert sun.

UCAL: Oft have I seen dried fish from the Sea of Galilee in the small caravans that come to Jerusalem, though we be off the great roads of the Romans where the business of the world is.

SIMON: Aye, the fish from Gennesaret go to the uttermost parts of the earth.

UCAL: So thou wouldest have a part in feeding the world, Simon?

SIMON: Aye, sir, if a man had asses and could send the fish out over the four Roman roads that pass through this city, if he could meet the caravans perchance three days' journey from the city, he could sell his merchandise at a great advance in price, for when a man is an hungered, he will pay much for food.

UCAL (*Laughing with delight at his shrewdness*) So, thou wouldest get the advantage of the other merchants by selling to the cara-

vans before they reach the market-place! On my honor, thou hast a clever wit, Simon. Thy plan is a good one and could be made profitable.

SIMON: Aye, if a man had money to buy asses and hire servants and do his own drying.

UCAL (*Rising and coming down steps*) Simon, son of John, we are well met. I did purpose in my heart to esteem thee for the damsel's sake, but now do I love thee for thyself. Thou art the husband of the daughter of my only sister Deborah and thou hast found favor in my sight. (*SIMON bows low and the women look impressed and delighted*) For many years Jehovah hath blessed me and I have laid up for myself great treasure in Jerusalem. For a score of years, I have purchased from my old friend Annas the right to set up my booths within the Temple courts and there have I sold animals and doves for the sacrifice. Other booths I have, outside the holy Temple, but the Temple trade hath ever been the best for profit.

ADINA: How is that, my uncle?

UCAL: Why, child, men will pay a higher price for the sacrificial lamb bought within the sacred Temple courts. It seems more holy and a more acceptable sacrifice to Jehovah if purchased there.

ADINA: *Is it better, uncle?*

UCAL (*At a sudden loss*) Why—well—er—surely it is for a man's convenience if he buy near the altar of sacrifice and need not bear with him for a distance. (*ADINA looks a bit doubtful*) But my friend Annas hath ever charged a high price for the rental, and year by year, as his age has increased, his heart has grown hard and he has increased to me the cost of my rents. When we came to make our covenant together at the last Passover season, he demanded of me a price out of all hope of a fair return in profit. Then I bound myself by an oath that not one shekel more of *my* treasure should ever go

into his coffers. I have kept that oath and other merchants now sell where my booths were wont to stand. As I said, I came here to Capernaum to seek out my sister Deborah, but I also had in view the discovering for myself a new manner of merchandising. And now, behold! My pious thought for the only daughter of Eleazar, my father, hath found favor in the sight of Jehovah and he hath set before me this excellent young man who shall minister to my needs. (*He lays his hand impressively on SIMON's shoulder*) Simon, son of John, the desire of thy heart shall come to thee. I will set me up as a merchant of fish and thou and thy brother Andrew will I put over the household of my merchandising and thou shalt have power and wealth to put into action thy shrewd and most excellent plan. Thou shalt become a mighty merchant in this great city. My eyes are opened and I see that opportunities for gain abound exceedingly here in Capernaum above that of our sacred Jerusalem.

ADINA (*Who has half risen, now kneeling and kissing her uncle's hand*) Uncle Ucal, this is like a dream come true.

DEBORAH (*Kissing his hands*) Now doth my heart rejoice that my daughter shall be lifted up to the place of her fathers.

UCAL (*Laying his hand affectionately on ADINA's head*) Ah, little niece, thou shalt have thy litters and thy slaves. No longer shalt thou fetch water upon thy head from the public well.

MAGDALA (*Rising and speaking in a quiet voice*) Truly, Ucal, thou art a just man and I rejoice that this household shouldst have the blessing of thy favor. Peace be unto thee.

(*All this time, SIMON has stood staring off into space as if some other sight met his gaze*)

ADINA (*Running to SIMON and clasping his hand*) O my Simon, the heart of thy little dove abounds with gladness that Jehovah hath thus made thy dream come true. (*She pulls herself back, swinging herself, hanging onto his hand with both hers in gay abandon*) Thou Simon, a merchant!!! (*She throws back her*

*head in mocking pride, then suddenly becomes aware of his abstraction)* Simon! Hast thou naught to say to my uncle Ucal for this his great favor to thee?

(SIMON turns and takes a long look at her and then slowly goes to UCAL and kisses him on both cheeks)

SIMON (*Voice strangely quiet*) O Ucal, son of Eleazar, I am much bounden to thee for the great kindness which thou hast this day shown to my household and to me who am but a fisherman of Galilee. May Jehovah bless thee, for thou art a just man and of great mercy.

UCAL: I pray thee, young man, that thou speak not of this favor. From henceforth thou shalt be to me as a son and I will be to thee as a father. Peace to thee.

ADINA: Why dost thou not laugh with joy as I do, my Simon?

DEBORAH: We will prepare us a feast and make merry.

ADINA (*Peering anxiously into SIMON's face*) My husband, why art thou so grave? Is not this indeed the fulfilling of thy dream?

SIMON (*Looking down at her gravely but lovingly*) Aye, little wife, thy uncle hath made me an offer that exceeds the wildest longings of yesterday.

ADINA: Then why dost thou not lift up thy countenance unto gayety?

SIMON (*Looking down at her*) I cannot become a merchant. The Master hath called me.

UCAL (*Sharply*) Master? What master?

SIMON: The Nazarene.

UCAL: That magician?

SIMON: He is not a magician.

UCAL: He hath tricked thee with the fish.

SIMON: Nay, it was not a trick.

MAGDALA: Simon, thou art mad to turn thee away from the good Ucal's kindness.

DEBORAH: It is some sorcery that hath got him.

UCAL (*Shaking his head wisely*) Aye, I feared the fellow was a sorcerer. It is the menace of this city. From Egypt and India they flock to this city with their strange devices to trick and deceive. This Nazarene hath picked up some wizardry by which he hath upset thy reason, my good Simon.

SIMON: Nay, sir, I have never thought more clearly nor more reasonably.

UCAL: It was clear to me from the first how the trick with the fish was done. Thou thyself didst say that at times quantities of fish come close to the shore and are to be caught by casting the net. Now, this sorcerer saw the fish approaching, but he put his eye of evil upon thee and didst keep thee and thy companions absorbed in his stories until of a sudden he gave command to cast thy net and then the fish seemed to thee, bewitched as thou wert, to be *his* doing.

SIMON: Nay, good Ucal, the fish were of a multitude never seen before.

MAGDALA: Perchance, Simon, in thy excitement thou didst see more than were in the net.

SIMON: Nay, nay, I tell thee it is not the *fish*; it is the *man*.

UCAL: Who is this man that he can give thee a better chance to use thy gifts than I can?

SIMON: I know not, but I *think* he is a king.

UCAL: A king?

DEBORAH (*Shaking her head*) It is sorcery. Alas!

MAGDALA (*Sharply*) Simon! Thou art out of thy mind.

ADINA (*Gently*) Where wilt thou go with him, my Simon?

SIMON: That I know not, Adina, but one thing I do know—there is a deeper meaning to my desire than I knew of when I spake with thee.

ADINA: What was it he said to thee?

SIMON: That I should fish for men. It is something greater than the swaying them to the purpose of my own wealth.

ADINA: Couldst thou not be a merchant and yet listen to the Teacher's words?

UCAL: Nay. He cannot be merchantman of mine if he consort with them that have familiar spirits. The hand of Jehovah hath ever been heavy against such as practice sorcery.

DEBORAH (*With a despairing cry*) Simon, thou *wilt* not leave us to our poverty?

MAGDALA: *Think*, lad, what thou doest.

ADINA: What does thy *heart* say, Simon?

SIMON (*His eyes uplifted and speaking with a ringing voice*) I will follow him.

CURTAIN

## Act Two

### Scene 1

SCENE: *The same.*

TIME: *Several months later.*

*As the curtain goes up, UCAL is seen coming slowly down stairway. His head is bowed and his attitude one of despondency. He stumbles front.*

*A SERVANT, dressed in brown, bustles down the stairs carrying vials and a roll of sheepskin. He crosses and goes out gate.*

*Enter, down stairway, AGUR, a Hebrew Physician. He is an old man with a long white beard. He is dressed handsomely and descends with a firm and dignified step. He glances at UCAL and an expression of sympathy crosses his face but, with something almost like a shrug, he crosses upstage as if to go out gate without speaking. UCAL turns and lays his hand on his shoulder.*

UCAL: O Agur, thou physician of excellence, hast thou aught of hope to speak to me concerning my sister Deborah?

AGUR: Ucal, son of Eleazer, the hand of Jehovah is heavy upon thy sister Deborah. At the falling of eventide, her spirit will depart. My medicines can avail her nothing now.

UCAL (*Pleading*) Agur, canst thou not even avail that the light come again into her eyes and she know me and give me her blessing before she depart hence forever?

AGUR: Nay, brother, with this fever they slip silently into the land of Sheol without again regaining the remembrance of those about them.

UCAL (*Beating his breast*) Alas! Alas! That words of harshness should have been the last she should ever hear from me. Agur, canst thou not call her spirit back for *one instant* of time?

AGUR: Nay, friend, it is beyond the power of man.

UCAL (*Clutching him*) It was about the young man, Simon, the husband of her daughter, that I spake harshly to her. He opposed me in a matter of business and, though my sister believed the right was with me, yet her heart clave to the young man and she refused to leave his dwelling and come with me. I was angered against her and shook off the dust of this house from my feet (*Voice breaking*) and now she is dying. (*He covers his face with his hands*. AGUR looks on pityingly. At last UCAL raises his head) But the damsels, Agur? What doeth the little damsels, her daughter?

AGUR: She riseth not from the floor beside the bed of her mother except to go to the housetop and look off over the hills. I think she longeth for the return of her husband. She seems possessed with the idea that if he and some companion of his would return her mother would be well. It is very pitiful, for, I tell thee, Ucal, there is no hope.

(Enter, by gate, MAGDALA. She is dressed gorgeously, as before, but now her dress is brilliant blue with a striped undergarment of coral color. AGUR sees her and starts, averting his face. He bows hastily to UCAL, and avoiding MAGDALA pointedly, goes out quickly through the gate. MAGDALA stands looking after him with a scornful and bitter smile)

MAGDALA (*In a hard voice to UCAL*) So! The good Deborah is dying? (UCAL nods his head sadly) Well, she hath had an evil, hard life.

UCAL: Who art thou, Mary of Magdala, to speak of her thus? She was a virtuous woman.

MAGDALA (*With terrible bitterness*) Aye, and hath had an evil, hard life of it, while I, who am an evil woman, have a gay life. (*She looks at him defiantly*)

UCAL: Thou shalt be recompensed for it hereafter.

MAGDALA: If there be a hereafter, but of *that* what surely have we? Mayhap this life is all, and the poor Deborah hath had her pains and her virtue for naught.

UCAL: Thou shalt not blaspheme here, Magdala—here in the presence of death.

MAGDALA: I do not blaspheme, Ucal. I pray the good Deborah may get her reward, but I think there is a strong likelihood that this life is all, and that it is *now or never* if one would make merry. (*She stands looking at UCAL in defiant hardness and bitterness. He stands shaken and at a loss to answer her. Enter down stairway, ADINA. She runs down halfway, dressed all in white. She peers down and calls in excited manner*)

ADINA: O uncle, *he is coming*. From the housetop, I see him.

UCAL (*Pityingly*) Who comes, my daughter?

ADINA: The Master. He will lay hands upon my mother and she will recover. (*She runs lightly up the stairway*)

UCAL (*His eyes meeting MAGDALA in sympathy*) Alas! Alas! This false hope will be the damsels undoing. I fear me for her life if her mother die.

MAGDALA (*Her face hard again*) If Jehovah live, then is he cruel as the Zeus that my Pandira prays to that he torture with grief that sweet damsels.

UCAL (*Sternly*) Woman, the ways of Jehovah are past finding out.

MAGDALA: Aye. I know they are. That is the reason I gave up trying to please him.

(*UCAL puts up his hand in protest, but he is too sad to expostulate. MAGDALA's face is bitter and defi-*

ant.) (*Slowly a golden light appears at the top of the stairs, faint at first and growing brighter till it floods the stairway. UCAL and MAGDALA see it and draw back in terror. They clutch one another and stand gazing fascinated at the light which rapidly becomes a blinding flood*)

MAGDALA (*In a shriek of agony*) Ucal! I am afraid! What is it?

(UCAL stands holding her, wide-eyed, but not speaking. Suddenly DEBORAH is seen at the head of the stairs. She wears no headdress and her brown hair is bound about her head. She runs lightly down the stairway, strangely young and full of vigor)

UCAL (*In a hoarse whisper*) It is her spirit.

DEBORAH (*Crossing with outstretched hand*) Ucal! My brother! Thou hast come.

MAGDALA (*In a ringing voice*) Nay, it is her very self! Deborah! It is thou.

DEBORAH (*Matter-of-fact tone*) And why should it not be myself? Are all in this house beside themselves? Andrew and Simon have come a long journey and the Master is with them and they are an hungered. Adina doth naught but sit upon the floor with tears streaming down her face kissing the feet of the good Jesus. Meantime he is weary and hath had no food. I, alone, will minister to his need. (*She turns toward house*)

UCAL (*Huskily*) Deborah, dost thou not know? Thou wast ill.

DEBORAH (*Turning a bewildered look on him*) Why, so I was! (*She puts hand to head*) Here I am without my veil! I do remember me the fever.

MAGDALA: Deborah, what happened?

DEBORAH (*Still with look of amazement on face*) I know not—except the Master was kneeling on the floor beside me and he took my hand and I arose.

UCAL: I was but *now* by thy side and thou didst not *know* me and thou wast *wasted* with the fever.

DEBORAH: Aye, I do remember me the weakness—but—there is no weakness now. (*She looks at them in delighted surprise. As she stretches out her arms, her face becomes radiant with joy as she realizes her strength*) Why! Ucal! I am alive as never before. It is as if a great fountain of life were let loose within me. (*She stands looking up with arms outstretched as the curtain goes down slowly to show passage of the night*)

### Scene 2

SCENE: *The same.*

DEBORAH, ADINA and MAGDALA are seen when curtain rises. DEBORAH wears a dark blue mantle and a white headdress. As the curtain goes up, she crosses and places a copper jar on the step by the tree. ADINA stands left watching her with quiet joy. MAGDALA stands by the gate peering out.

TIME: *Morning of the next day.*

MAGDALA: The sun is terrible. The people will weary if he come not soon.

ADINA: Jehovah grant that Peter find him upon the mountain.

MAGDALA: Peter?

ADINA (*Smiling*) That is his new name—Simon's. Didst thou not know that the Master hath given him a new name?

MAGDALA: What significance hath it?

ADINA (*Proudly*) It means *rock*.

MAGDALA (*Laughing, stopping, then laughing again*) Rock? Thy Simon *a rock*?

ADINA: Why not?

MAGDALA: Well, if I had the naming of him, I should call him the Waterspout! Thou knowest, little Adina, that thy husband is sudden and changeable. Tremendous, he might be, I can fancy, but steady, like a rock—or firm—no, Adina, thy friend Jesus doth not understand Simon, the son of John, if he name him the Rock. (*She peers out of gate*) (*ADINA runs and flings open the gate*) Here comes thy uncle Ucal. He is the one I should call the rock.

(Enter UCAL, bearing two rich caskets in his hand)

UCAL (*Coming downstage and setting caskets on step*) My sister, what meaneth the great throng that is about thy dwelling? The whole city waits in the glare of the morning without thy gate. It was all I could do to force my way through the crowd.

DEBORAH: They wait for the Master. (*Her whole bearing and manner of speaking have changed since the first act. There are strength and hope and confidence in her attitude and she looks younger*)

UCAL: Then the rumor of thy healing hath spread throughout the city?

DEBORAH: Not only mine, Ucal, but that of scores of others—cripples and blind—whom he healed last even. Standing upon our outer stairway far into the night, he healed all who were brought to him. He was weary from his long journey, but he would not rest. The food I prepared for him he ate standing while he ministered to the wretched ones who pressed about him.

UCAL (*Gravely*) It is past understanding, but where is he this morning? I saw many rich litters as I made my way through the throng. Great ones of the city are out there in the street, mighty men of standing and of wealth.

DEBORAH (*Crossing and peering anxiously through slats of gate*) Aye. I would that the Master would come. It will hurt his cause if the people grow weary. There are many out there who could be of great assistance to him once they become convinced that he is worthy—if he show them a mighty wonder.

UCAL: Where is he?

ADINA: That we know not, uncle. Late last even, after the last poor wretch had gone shouting from him—O uncle, the sights we beheld: the delirium of joy of those who *saw* for the first time, of those who *walked!*—after they had all gone, he stretched his mat upon the housetop and slept, as we all did, wearied with the strangeness and excitement of it all. Early this morning, before it was yet light, I was awakened by strange sounds and looking out (*She points to gate*) I saw what thou canst now see—the whole city gathered before our gate. I hastened and waked my Peter and he ran quickly to the housetop to arouse the Master, but he was not there.

UCAL: Gone without a word?

ADINA: Aye.

UCAL: Thou knowest not whither?

ADINA: Peter and Andrew and the sons of Zebedee have gone to seek him. They think they will find him upon the mountain.

UCAL (*Amazed*) Upon the *mountain?* Why should he go *there?*

ADINA: It is his custom. Often after a long day of healing, he leaves his band and goeth off thus alone into the desert places. Sometimes he spends whole nights thus.

UCAL: What for?

ADINA: Peter says they have never dared to ask him, but they *think* he goes to pray.

UCAL: To *pray?* Why, it is in the synagogue that men *pray*.

ADINA: Aye, but he goeth into the mountains.

UCAL: Whole nights, thou sayest?

ADINA: Sometimes. Always for hours.

UCAL (*Frowning*) Well, no man needs *hours* to pray in. There is some mystery in this. I will talk with the man. I have brought

rich gifts with which to reward him for thy healing, Deborah.  
(*He nods to caskets*)

ADINA (*Touching the caskets curiously and excitedly*) O uncle, I am glad thou hast brought him presents.

UCAL (*Peering out gate and speaking with a shade of annoyance*) Strange for him to run away like that. He might have known that the wonders of last night would bring him results. He should *be* here. There are men out there who are not accustomed to stand about in the heat for any one. I saw Jairus and Ethnial and others of like standing. The fellow is a fool to risk losing the interest of such men.

ADINA: It is too bad! My Peter was so happy over his great success of last night.

UCAL: Has he never regretted turning his back on the favor I vouchsafed him?

ADINA: Never, uncle. We all believe that this Jesus is a prophet of Jehovah and that great honor will come to Peter through his favor.

(*Enter SIMON, through the gate. He wears the regular dress of the Hebrew but it is in great disarray. He holds the gate and turns and shouts outside in a furious voice*)

SIMON: I tell ye he will not come. Ye get nothing for your pains tarrying here. Get ye gone. He comes *not*. (Many voices joining in angry protest are heard from without) I tell ye he is gone away. He is not coming back. Begone. He comes not. Ye wait in vain. (He slams the gate and the murmur as of a multitude is heard. SIMON is flushed and scowling. He strides downstage as if too angry to speak)

DEBORAH: Simon! Where *is* he?

SIMON (*Voice hoarse with anger*) Woman, I know not.

ADINA: Didst thou not find him?

SIMON (*Behind shut teeth*) Oh, I found him.

ADINA: Where is he?

SIMON (*Sullenly*) I tell thee I know not. (*He has never spoken thus to her and ADINA's lip trembles like a child about to cry. SIMON gives himself an angry shake and flings himself upon the lowest step about the tree, slumping over with chin in hand and kicking the stones of the pavement viciously*)

ADINA (*Going to him cautiously and speaking gently*) My Peter, tell me what has angered thee.

SIMON: Call me not by that name. My name is Simon.

ADINA (*Amazed*) Peter!

MAGDALA (*Looking out gate*) They are going. The crowd has accepted thy gentle invitation, Simon, and are taking themselves off. There goeth the rich Jiphtah with his slaves, and, by Mercury, there is my old husband Paphus. Truly the doings of the Nazarene have made a great stir to have gotten Paphus upon his virtuous Hebrew legs all the way from Magdala. He was ever averse to the heat of the morning too! There be dark looks and evil mutterings of anger among those mighty men who have humbled themselves to search out a traveling sorcerer. Truly it is a sorry jest that thy Master hath played upon the great of this city!

SIMON: Call him not my master.

DEBORAH (*With a new dignity and authority*) Simon, how canst thou say that? Look at me. Dost thou forget what the Master hath done for Deborah?

SIMON (*Fiercely*) Aye, but what good will it do him or me if he scorn those who might help him?

UCAL: Young man, when thou hast somewhat recovered thee of thy fierce wrath, we would hear somewhat of thy adventure. (*MAGDALA looks at SIMON and laughs silently, leaning on the gate*)

ADINA: Aye, Peter, speak to me. (*She kneels beside him*) O thou whom my soul loveth, thou art not angered with thy Adina?

SIMON (*Reaching out to stroke her head without looking up*) Nay, nay, my fair one, but the heart of thy Simon is heavy with bitterness and disappointment.

ADINA (*Softly*) Didst find Jesus?

SIMON: Aye, I found him.

ADINA: Where *is* he?

SIMON: I tell thee I know not and I care not.

MAGDALA (*Smiling and motioning toward a water-jar on the stairway*) Perchance a draught from the well would somewhat cool the young man's heat. (*She laughs, looking at SIMON's back*)

ADINA (*Rising quickly and fetching the jar which she offers to him held upon her bent arm*) The heat of the sun hath been fierce upon thee and thou art weary with a long climb up the mountain. I pray thee that thou wilt ease thee of thy burning thirst, my husband.

(SIMON *rises and without a word drinks long and deeply from the jar as it is held by ADINA on the crook of her elbow*)

UCAL (*With quiet authority*) Now, Simon, we will hear thee.

SIMON: Know then, O Ucal, that a company of us have been following the Nazarene over the hills of Galilee and into the remote regions of Samaria. There we have seen such wonders as have convinced us that this Jesus is indeed a mighty man of power and a prophet of Jehovah. The blind recover sight, the lame walk, and the poor are taught as freely as the rich. We of his band have become filled with a great longing that this Teacher should be known and approved in Capernaum and in Jerusalem where men of learning and influence be. Last even, thou knowest, the fame of him spread—as we had hoped—and this morning, instead of the offscourings and the beggars of the city,

I beheld when I looked from the housetop that mighty men of power and of influence had come out to find him. All Capernaum had poured itself out to the humble dwelling of a fisherman to seek Jesus, the Nazarene. "Ah!" I thought, "if they see what we have seen! If he do his mighty works here in Capernaum, his power will be established, he will become our nation's leader, and I—I whom he hath named the Rock—I—" Oh, thou knowest, Ucal, the power I feel within me to rule—I remember his words when he summoned me to follow him—that from henceforth *I should fish for men.* (*He flings up his head and looks at ADINA.*) Oh, Adina, my heart leaped within me as I thought how I should serve him, how I should execute his judgments and how mayhap it might be even I who should set him upon his throne, the throne of Israel, *he* the righteous one, *he* the favored of Jehovah, the chosen one, and then I turned me from gazing upon the subjects I beheld awaiting him and sought to rouse him from slumber. *He was gone!* Ah, well knew I where. Far up the steep sides of the mountain I must toil if I would find him. I summoned Andrew and the sons of Zebedee, and, sore and angry at the trick he had played us, we started our long climb, hallooing as we went. Thou knowest, Adina, how rough the way is. We were cut by stones, we were bruised by brambles, but we pressed on, cursing his folly, yet ever hoping we should find him and get him back before the people should go away in anger. Thou knowest where the cave is with the great rock jutting out, called the Devil's Jaw Bone?

ADINA: Why, Peter, that is at the very top of the mountain!

SIMON: Aye, it was there that I came upon him suddenly. The sun was just coming up and he sat looking off toward the east as calmly and as quietly as if a whole city were not waiting for him in the plain below. Oh, my wrath kindled against him, as I saw him sitting thus and thought how we had hurried and sweated and wearied ourselves to find him, and fierce words rose to my lips and *then* he turned and looked at me. (*SIMON's face glows as he recalls the look*)

ADINA: Ah! It is wondrous lovely when he looks at one!

SIMON: The words I had thought to speak died on my lips, but I spake sternly nevertheless. I said: "All men seek thee," and he saw that I was displeased. Then I turned and hallooed to the others and they came scrambling up. We poured out our reproaches upon him, telling him that great men of the city had come out to seek him and that it was wrong of him and foolish not to be girded and ready to take advantage of the help they might be to him.

UCAL: What said he to that, Simon?

SIMON: What thinkest thou he said? Oh! My wrath flames up when I think of it! He turned and looked at us, tired and hot and angry as we were, and said: "Let us go somewhere else into the country towns on the other side of this mountain that I may make my proclamation in them also, for it was for that I came." With that he arose and started down the mountain away from Capernaum!

ADINA: Peter!

UCAL: What didst thou do—thou and the men with thee?

SIMON (*Bitterly*) What did they do? Why, they followed him like a lot of silly sheep.

MAGDALA: And thou?

SIMON: I whirled in my anger and I strode down the mountain, leaving him to his folly.

ADINA: Simon! Thou didst leave the Master?

SIMON: Well, *some one* had to come back to appease the wrath of them who were waiting here. I tell thee it needs a man of soft words to speak to an angry multitude—a multitude that has waited long in patient expectation of one who scorns them and does not come.

MAGDALA: We heard thy soft and winsome words to the multitude as thou didst bang the gate behind thee. (*She laughs*) I do

not think thou didst soften their hearts, Simon. I saw sullen looks and heard growls of anger as the men departed.

SIMON (*Kicking the stones*) So! He has turned his back and left me to my ruined hopes.

UCAL: No man turns away from good fortune without strong reason. Why thinkest thou, Simon, that this Nazarene suffered this great opportunity to slip from his grasp?

SIMON: How can I tell? I only know that I am sick at heart at his ingratitude and at his stupidity. It were sorry work serving a master who hath no more soundness of discretion than he has shown. What boots it that I execute shrewdly for him if he have not the wit to take advantage of my wisdom?

UCAL: Canst thou not think of any reason why he should not desire to face the multitude that sought him this morning?

SIMON: I can think of no reason, Ucal. The choicest of the city were at our gate.

UCAL: The man is cunning beyond thy reckoning, Simon.

SIMON: What meanest thou, O Ucal?

UCAL: It is plain to me. As I said all along, the fellow is a sorcerer. At eventide, with the dark coming on, he could deceive the poor foolish ones of the city—those silly ones who are ever first to run after any new thing—but, like all evil-doers, he feared the light, and most of all he feared the keen sight of those who are wise and mighty and not easily tricked by the cheap wonders of the juggler. *He was afraid.* He did well not to face the sort of men who were but now gathered outside that gate. In the little villages, shut off from the world of knowledge, his magic may avail to get him food and shelter till even the foolish folk be no longer blinded and drive him from their towns.

DEBORAH: Ucal! Look at me. Is it *jugglery* that *I*, who was dying, stand here full of life?

MAGDALA: And the *light*, Ucal! Thou forgettest the light.

UCAL: Truly, sister, thy recovery is marvelous, yet must thou not forget that Agur, the mightiest physician of Capernaum, was with thee all of yesterday. Perchance his remedies were more potent than even *he* wot of.

DEBORAH (*With a ringing voice of conviction and confidence*) Nay, Ucal, it was no remedy of a physician that placed within my veins the leaping fire of life I feel. It is like a sweet and magic fountain within me, springing up in vigor and hope and joy.  
(*Her face is transfigured*)

SIMON: Aye, mother, it is *ever* thus with all he heals. He is no trickster whatever else he may be. Simple and unwise as he hath shown himself to be, yet hath he within him some strange and mighty power that other men have not. It is a power he can transfer unto another man.

UCAL (*Sharply*) What's that?

SIMON: It is true, O Ucal. I *know*, for once (*His face glows*) he let me heal a woman.

ADINA: *Thou*, Peter?

SIMON: Aye, Adina, thy Peter. I have not told thee. It was an old woman—or so she seemed, for she was paralyzed. It was horrible to see her stumping along dragging a useless arm and leg. The Master had been telling us that if we asked anything of the Father (*For so he always speaks of Jehovah*) *we must believe that we have it* and it should be ours. Then the woman came hobbling up and Jesus smiled at me and said: "Heal her, Peter." And I prayed the Father for health for that woman. I prayed as I had never prayed before, and, suddenly—I know not how it was—I *knew that I had it*, the thing I had asked for. I *saw* her straight and strong and well, and (*He whispers in an awed voice*), behold! I looked upon her and *she was healed*.

(*All but Ucal look impressed*)

UCAL (*With a shrug*) Bah! The man hath bewitched thee.

SIMON: Nay, Ucal, what I know, I know. 'Twas thus the healing came. I did not *wonder*, I did not *hope* the Father would give me healing for that woman, *I knew*. And when I knew, then, on that instant, was she healed.

MAGDALA (*Tense*) If thou askest the Father anything? Did he say *anything*, Simon?

SIMON (*Face glowing*) Aye, Magdala. He said *anything*.

MAGDALA (*Trembling*) Thinkest thou he meant that one could have forgiveness for the *asking*—forgiveness of sins terrible and black.

SIMON: Though thy sins be as scarlet—

MAGDALA (*Wearily*) Oh, I know the words of the Prophet Isaiah, but the interpreters of the law declare that they were not meant for such as I.

SIMON: *He* says that it is not the will of our Father that *one* of his little ones should perish.

MAGDALA: Not *one*, Simon?

SIMON: So he says, Magdala.

UCAL: Now know I he is no true prophet, for outcasts have ever been condemned by the wrath of Jehovah to everlasting fire.

MAGDALA: I am heavy with the hideous weight of my sin. (*She buries her face in her hands*) If my father had lived, I should not now be the evil woman I am.

SIMON: The Master says that *like* as a father pitith his children, so Jehovah pitith them that trust him.

UCAL: What foolishness is this? Jehovah doth not pity. Jehovah is a Judge, terrible in his judgments and in his wrath.

MAGDALA: I know my father would have forgiven me of his great love for me.

SIMON: The Master saith that the love of an earthly father doth but faintly shadow forth the great and undying and tender love that Jehovah hath for every one of us.

MAGDALA (*Her voice trembling with wonder*) Jehovah *loving*? O Simon, dost think that *could* be true? Think, think! If the All-Powerful One were *loving* too!

SIMON: He says that God *is* Love.

MAGDALA: My life and all that I have would I give to *know* that that is true.

DEBORAH: If thou hadst felt the leaping power of joy within thy being as I have felt it, then wouldest thou *know* that it is true.

SIMON: *He* saith the kingdom of Jehovah is within every one of us and that his kingdom is love.

MAGDALA: Such words as those thou hast listened to and yet thou leavest him?

ADINA: Aye, Peter, how *couldst* thou leave the Master?

DEBORAH: Thou shouldst be by his side.

UCAL: The man has shown himself unworthy of Simon's pains.

SIMON: Nay, good Ucal, not unworthy—that he will never be.

UCAL: Surely he hath this day shown himself weak and unstable, and far too simple to ever be a leader of our nation.

SIMON: Weak he may be and lacking in the wisdom of this world, but unworthy, *never*.

UCAL: Thou doest well to turn thee from a weakling.

SIMON: To whom else shall I go? He hath the words of eternal life.

MAGDALA: Simon, dost thou believe his words are truth?

SIMON: Aye, Magdala.

MAGDALA: Then must I find him.

DEBORAH: I will go with thee.

ADINA (*Looking pleadingly at SIMON*) Peter?

SIMON: Yes, yes, we will go too. I will lead ye to the Master. I will show ye the way. In my impatience I left him but now do I see that *because* of his helplessness he hath need of me. Ye women shall minister to him and I—oh, I was foolish to leave him in anger. I should have reasoned with him. I should have pointed out to him quietly the advantages that would come to him if he sought out men of influence and affairs instead of wasting his days on the poor and helpless. In his eagerness to help all that are in sorrow he forgetteth his duty to our nation. I will remind him of it. Why—Adina—(*A sudden light breaks over his face*) it was the very strength he lacks that he felt in me. I see it now. It was for that very thing he named me Peter. Adina, he needs me. The Master needs me. He shall lean upon me and I will sustain him. He shall declare righteousness and I will execute it. I will guide him in wisdom. The power I ever possessed to manage men will I devote to his cause. I—even I—will establish his kingdom for him. He is worthy to be our King. He is the righteous prophet of Jehovah. In me did he recognize the impregnable rock. He knew my power. He saw my strength. In wisdom did he call me to his service. Before his feet will I hew a way. To the throne of the twelve tribes of Israel will I lead him. I, Peter, shall infuse his weakness with my strength. My counsel shall guide his feet to the throne of David. My firmness shall establish him; my strength shall sustain him. (*He raises his right arm with a gesture of authority*) I AM PETER, THE ROCK.

CURTAIN

## ACT THREE

SCENE: *The housetop of a dwelling in Bethany.*

TIME: *The evening of the Crucifixion.*

*At the side and rear of this house, there are palms growing which are tall enough to spread over housetop upstage. About this roof is a balustrade formed of rough stones of alternate sizes forming something like a battlement effect. Upstage, R, is an opening in the balustrade where an outside stairway goes down. The stones on either side of stairway are higher, forming an entrance. About the roof, in the openings formed by the low stones, stand one or two copper jars and bowls and other household utensils, including some small Grecian lamps lighted. There are straw mats on the stone floor. The sky is blue-black with stars and a crescent moon. In the distance, the lights of Jerusalem are faintly seen.*

DEBORAH stands upstage looking off with her back to the audience. She shades her eyes with her hand and peers off leaning forward anxiously. Suddenly she moves toward stairway and leans over expectantly.

Enter, up stairway, UCAL and MAGDALA. UCAL is dressed richly, as before, but both he and MAGDALA look worn and somewhat crumpled. MAGDALA wears a blue mantle and the white veil of the penitent. UCAL assists MAGDALA, who comes front as if spent with weariness. She sinks upon a mat downstage, R, UCAL helping her. Then UCAL turns and looks silently at DEBORAH.

DEBORAH: It is over? (UCAL nods sadly) Dost thou mean he is dead?

UCAL: Aye, Deborah, Jesus of Nazareth is dead.

DEBORAH: Then Jehovah be praised, that his suffering is past! Was it not sooner than thou didst even hope?

UCAL: Aye. The other poor fellows are still alive.

DEBORAH: But they were thieves.

UCAL (*With something like sternness in his voice*) Aye, but they suffer. My sister, it is horrible that men should thus torture their fellow men. I have never witnessed a crucifixion before and my soul doth rise within me in protest against such brutal means.

MAGDALA: It is the lowest death a man can die. Even the Romans do not crucify except a man be a vile and wicked slave. No free man is ever thus tortured and humiliated.

UCAL: It is the blackest stain upon our nation's record that a just man and free should die this evil death.

DEBORAH: His truth will live.

UCAL (*Sadly*) Nay, sister, that is the saddest thing of all. The man was good and doubtless had in mind reforms that would have helped to purify our nation, but he hath died a felon's death and so his teaching is disgraced, his followers are scattered and his life was lived in vain. (*He sighs*) Well, we have done what we could. (*He sighs*) Joseph, the Arimathæan, begged his body of Pilate and we have buried it in a new tomb where never man was laid.

DEBORAH (*Thinking*) Tomorrow is the sabbath, but the first day of the week will we go with spices to his tomb, Magdala.

MAGDALA: Aye, Deborah, we will arise early and do him that last and loving service.

DEBORAH: What didst thou mean, Ucal, by saying that his followers were scattered?

MAGDALA (*With scorn*) All but John left him when he was arrested.

DEBORAH (*With a cry, looking from one to the other*) Not Peter?  
(MAGDALA *glances at UCAL*)

UCAL (*Clearing his throat several times*) Thou must not be too severe in thy judgment of these young men. Simon, indeed, followed him to the house of Caiaphas, but there he became terrified and fled. It is indeed a dangerous plight these young men find themselves in. Their leader hath been declared a felon by the law and hath died the lowest death a man can suffer. At any moment, his followers may be arrested and condemned as he was.

DEBORAH: Ah! but to *desert* him!

UCAL: The arrest was sudden and at night. They were all unprepared. Up to the very end, they thought he would set up a *kingdom*.

DEBORAH: So did we all, alas! A kingdom of righteousness and justice.

UCAL: Deborah, thou knowest I have become convinced of the worth and goodness of this Nazarene, but ever since he drove the traders from the Temple have I known his cause was hopeless. It was a direct attack upon the most valued privilege of the high priest. From that day Annas hath been unremitting in his zeal for the young man's destruction.

MAGDALA: He could have *saved* himself, I am convinced.

UCAL: If he could, then why hath he died?

MAGDALA: Ucal, I know not. There is a deeper meaning to his death than we yet wot of.

UCAL: Mayhap. (*He shakes his head*) For me, at least, the death of this just man hath a meaning that shall change the thought and conduct of my life.

DEBORAH: Why, Ucal, how is that?

UCAL (*Sternly*) I saw him *beaten*. I saw him *humiliated*. I saw him *faint* under the torture that was inflicted upon him in the

name of *justice*, and then—oh—(*He shudders*) I saw his cruel death, and not only his, Deborah, but the others, those worthless ones. I saw *their* agony, an agony no man, however vile, should suffer; and life to me can never be the same. There are wrongs here in this city that must be righted. In dark and lonely dungeons, *my* brothers rot and die. If Jehovah spare my life, my wealth, my days and all my influence shall be spent in bringing the sun of justice and mercy to the prisoners in Jerusalem who languish in despair.

MAGDALA (*As if trying to work something out in her own mind*)  
Thus through his death shall others live.

UCAL: Now, at last, are mine eyes open to the injustice that hath ever been before them. O God, that this just man should die ere I could see my brothers' need!

DEBORAH (*Weeping*) That his sweet life is done! O God, this cruel world! O base ingratitude, that those he loved should flee from him! O Peter! Peter! Thou whom he did name *the rock*! Thou weak and fearful boy! Alas, Adina's heart will break!

MAGDALA: Where is the little maid?

DEBORAH: Searching for her love. I could not stay her when the tidings came that the Master had been arrested. She was beside herself for Peter's life and all this day hath she sought tidings of her husband.

UCAL (*Looking down stairway and speaking low*) Even now she cometh.

DEBORAH (*Clutching Magdala*) Oh, tell not of the young man's cowardice. She hath ever loved him for his courage.

UCAL (*Hurriedly*) They were all panic-stricken and knew not what they did. No man shall condemn another, for, in such a case, he knoweth not himself what he would do.

MAGDALA: Yet didst not thou fear to stay. O *slaves and cowards!*

UCAL: I was in no danger. My position and my standing did protect me. They were all strangers in the city with nowhere to flee for safety.

(Enter ADINA. *She looks white and spent*)

ADINA (*Anxiously to DEBORAH*) Hath he yet returned? Hath my Peter come?

DEBORAH (*Gently*) Not yet, my daughter.

ADINA: O uncle, hast thou *seen* him, hast thou *seen* my husband?

UCAL (*Kindly*) Nay, child, but he will come.

ADINA: O Ucal, dost thou *think* he will? *Magdala*, hast thou not seen him? (MAGDALA *shakes her head*) All the long night, in terror did I wait, and all the long day have I searched the streets of Jerusalem but no man hath tidings of my husband.

UCAL (*Laying his hand on her head*) My child, in his good time, thy husband will return to thee. Meantime, my little one, thou must rest and eat, for thou art spent with thy anxiety.

DEBORAH (*Eagerly*) Aye. Food have I prepared. Ye must all partake of it, for ye are weary with the long and dreadful vigil.

UCAL (*Following DEBORAH to stairway*) Aye, Deborah, we will eat. Come. (*He motions to the others*) Come, Magdala. Come, my daughter.

MAGDALA (*Shaking her head*) Nay, good Ucal, I cannot eat.

ADINA (*To DEBORAH*) Go, my mother, and serve my uncle Ucal. Suffer me to abide with Magdala. I want no food. I cannot bear the house, tonight.

DEBORAH: My child——

ADINA: Nay, mother, leave me. I cannot breathe within the narrow walls tonight.

MAGDALA: Aye, let her rest her here.

DEBORAH: I will bring food and set it there upon the parapet. (*She points R*) There shalt thou find it when thy hunger calls.

(DEBORAH and UCAL go downstairs. ADINA wanders upstage and stands looking off toward Jerusalem  
Suddenly she turns to MAGDALA)

ADINA: Why, Magdala, thou *must* have seen my Peter. Thou wast with Jesus to the end?

MAGDALA: To the end.

ADINA: Where was my Peter? *Magdala!* Thou art keeping something from me! (*She clutches MAGDALA'S shoulder*) Is my husband *dead*?

MAGDALA: Nay, nay. He lives. I know.

ADINA: Then hast thou seen him. *Where* didst thou see him, Magdala?

MAGDALA (*Hastily and guiltily*) Nay, nay, I saw him not. (*She sees the doubt and fear in ADINA'S face which she presses close to MAGDALA*) How can I tell whom I saw in all that wild and hurried mass? O child, if thou hadst been there and hadst seen the Master chained to the cruel pillar in Pilate's courtyard and hadst seen those brutes of Romans who flung upon his naked back their weighted whips—oh! (*She shudders and falls to moaning*)

ADINA (*Voice breaking*) My Peter is *dead*. Such affront to our Master would he never suffer and live. (*She bends over, weeping silently, then turns to MAGDALA again and speaks in a childish whimper*) Dost thou think he is dead, Magdala?

MAGDALA: Nay, he liveth.

ADINA (*Coming close and sitting on her heels beside MAGDALA*) How dost thou know, Magdala, if thou didst not see him?

MAGDALA: Perchance I did see him. I do not remember.

ADINA: Why, Magdala, thou couldst not have forgot my Peter if thou hadst seen him. (*MAGDALA does not answer. ADINA looks at her expecting some reply*) And at the burial, Magdala? But now, the wife of Alphæus did tell me how my uncle Ucal and the good Nicodemus helped thee to take him from the cross and that Ucal was with thee, sustaining thee, when they carried his body to the sepulchre. Where was my Peter then?

MAGDALA: I have told thee, Adina, I do not know.

(*ADINA wanders upstage and looks off. After a moment she turns*)

ADINA: But last even, Magdala, when the Master was arrested? Thou saidst thou wast in the courtyard of Caiaphas. Didst thou not see Peter, then?

MAGDALA (*Her face grows hard as she remembers PETER'S treachery. She starts up as if to blurt out the truth, but as she sees the childish face bent over hers, she sinks back*) I do not remember.

ADINA (*Staring front with her hands clasped*) Then is my Peter dead, or what I fear me most, chained in some dungeon where he is impotent to give his life for the Master.

MAGDALA: Nay, Adina, there were none arrested save Jesus only.

ADINA (*Solemnly*) Then is he dead. (*She stands a moment silent, then seeming to feel some doubt in MAGDALA, she speaks with dignified reproach*) If thou didst know the heart of my beloved as I know it, Magdala, then wouldst thou be assured that no man could lay hands on Jesus save over Peter's body slain. (*She wanders upstage and sinks, weeping, her head buried in her arms and her arms on the balustrade. Silence. She lifts her head to the sky*) Oh, that I could but know where thy body lies! (*She rises*) My Peter! My Rock! That some one who saw thee fall could tell me of thy sweet courage! (*She stands with hands clasped straining her eyes to heaven, facing R*)

(Enter, SIMON, crawling up stairway. He is covered with mud and his garments hang wet and draggled

*about him. His head is crouched into his neck, his shoulders bent and his whole appearance that of misery and despair. ADINA sees him as he slouches past her and starts in alarm)*

ADINA: Oh! Who art thou? (*She peers after him as he turns away his head*) Peter! (*Her voice is wild with joy as she runs to him*)

SIMON (*Sinking in a heap on floor L*) Come not nigh unto me.

ADINA: O my love, thou art not dead!

SIMON (*Recoiling from her*) Do not touch me. (*He flings himself prone upon the floor*)

ADINA (*Bending over him*) Thou art wounded, O my husband.

SIMON (*Shrinking away from her touch*) Touch me not. I am accursed.

ADINA (*Kneeling beside him*) My beloved, thou art beside thyself with sorrow.

SIMON: I am drunk with guilt. (*He shudders and a great groan escapes him*)

ADINA: Guilt? (*Tenderly*) How couldst thou save him? Thou alone? It was the will of Jehovah, my beloved. What could man avail? (*She starts to lay her hand on his shoulder*)

SIMON (*Drawing away*) Thou shalt never touch me again, thou pure child of God. Fly from me, for I am evil!

ADINA: Softly, my Peter, thou art crazed with grief. Thy garments are soaked with the rain and thou art weak for lack of food. Thou must eat.

(DEBORAH enters from stairway and places a bowl upon the parapet R. She exchanges a look with MAGDALA, nods toward PETER and then slips down the stairs in silence)

SIMON (*His head hidden in his arms*) My tears have been my meat day and night.

ADINA (*Tenderly*) Peter, I loved him too. I did not see his cruel death, but here in my heart a weight of agony doth bear me down, yet must we live.

PETER: O God, that I could die!

ADINA (*Softly*) Jehovah did not suffer thee that thou shouldst die with him. Comfort thine heart, my beloved. Dost fear thy Adina doubts that thou wouldst gladly give the last drop of thy blood in his defense? (*A low moan of agony from SIMON*) Lift up thy head, my husband. Comfort the heart of thy wife with the tale of the struggle and of thy courage. Speak to me, Peter—Peter, my *Rock*.

MAGDALA: Child, thou wilt slay him.

ADINA (*Aside to MAGDALA*) Nay, Magdala, I do but seek to rouse him. If he speaks not his heart will break.

SIMON (*Raising his head*) Now is it broken. (*He draws away from her and looks at her with terrible intent*) I was afraid.

ADINA (*Not understanding*) Afraid?

SIMON: Curse me and go thy way. Seek not to look upon my face. In his hour of need, I was consumed with fear for my own worthless life and I forsook him.

ADINA (*Tenderly*) He raveth, Magdala. My poor Peter, what shall I do?

SIMON (*With a groan*) I did deny that I had ever known him.

ADINA (*A terrible fear dawning*) Magdala!

MAGDALA (*Rising and taking her tenderly in her arms*) My child, this is the cup the Father hath given thee and thou must drink it.

ADINA (*With a cry*) Magdala, I cannot drink it. (*She seizes MAGDALA, crying in a sharp voice*) Tell me it is not true.

(There is a long and tensé silence in which ADINA stretches out her arms first to SIMON, then to MAGDALA, who turns away her face. As neither looks at her, she gives a heartbroken cry) O God! He is a coward.  
(She flings herself sobbing on the floor)

SIMON (*In a terrible voice of condemnation*) Bread and salt was there between us, yet I did deny him. Oh, that I had slain myself in the cave of Hinnom where I wandered seeking to hide me from my guilty self.

ADINA (*Lifting her head*) Thou hast been all day in the valley of Hinnom?

SIMON: Entreating Jehovah that he would let me die.

ADINA (*Rising wearily*) Then thou hast had no food. (*She starts as if to go down the stairway, then sees the bowl on parapet. She fetches it and kneels beside him*) See. Here is meat. Thou art spent and weary. Eat. (*Her voice is dull and lifeless*)

SIMON (*Staring at the bowl but not appearing to notice it*) Three times, with heavy oath, I did fling out that I had never known him.

ADINA: Eat.

SIMON: It was a Roman soldier first. That was when he was taken before the high priest. Then, at midnight, one of the officers of the household pointed me out, where I stood hiding behind a pillar, and I did declare that I knew him not. And at the third hour, a serving maid laughed in my face and said she did know by my Galilean speech that I was one of his friends and I did curse and shout that I had never seen the man. It was then that he turned and looked at me.

ADINA (*Holding out the sop to him*) Just this morsel of food.

SIMON (*Shrinking back in horror*) It was thus, last even, at this very hour, that he did offer me the sop in token of his great love for me. O God, I cannot bear myself. (*He flings himself*

*prone.* ADINA presses the sop on him. He shakes his head)  
Nay, I will not eat.

(ADINA sighs and crossing heavily, sets the bowl back  
on parapet. She returns and kneels beside SIMON)

ADINA: Did ye all eat the Passover together?

SIMON: Aye, and such a feast of joy it was! What things he  
said, Adina! Things that did make our hearts leap within us.

ADINA: What things, Simon? (*She is like a woman trying to coax a  
child. All the child has gone from her*)

SIMON: The things that we should do. He said far greater things  
than he had ever done, and the joy that should be ours! (MAG-  
DALA lifts her head and listens) He spake so much of joy,  
Adina. That now was his joy fulfilled. And such a radiance  
as was upon his face! (*His face is transfigured as he remem-  
bers*) And that the same joy that was in him (*He hesitates and  
speaks in an awed voice*) he said it, that the joy of being in union  
with the Father should be ours—ours, Adina, as it was his, that  
the Father was in us even as he was in him and that was why  
we should do greater works than he had'done. And he called us  
*friends*, and said that if we should ask the Father anything in  
his name he would give it to us. Oh, I see him now as he said:  
“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask and ye shall  
receive, that your joy may be full.” Always he spake of joy  
and we knew that his kingdom was at hand. It was like the  
glorious entry into Jerusalem when all the people shouted and  
spread their garments in his path, only it was more beautiful  
and full of power and confidence. And then he spake of things  
we did not understand, something about *going away* so that some  
great power could come to us. And he said that we should  
behold his glory. Then he spake as if some evil thing were  
going to happen to him, as if men would be unjust to him and  
turn away from him, and I, filled with love and loyalty, cried  
out that if every one in the world should leave him—— (*He has  
risen and his face is illumined with the blessed memory.* Sud-

*denly he comes to himself and his head falls forward with a groan)*

ADINA (*Bending over him eagerly*) What then? What said he then, Peter?

SIMON (*In a horrified voice*) He said: "Before the cock shall crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." (*With a cry*) O Adina, *he knew, even then, he knew the blackness of my heart.*

MAGDALA: He knows the deepest depths of sin.

SIMON: And now he is dead, and I am sick with loathing of myself. (*He springs to his feet, his face drawn with suffering*) O God, I cannot bear the blackness of my soul.

ADINA: Simon, spake he not to thee when he turned his look upon thee in the house of the high priest?

SIMON: His eyes did speak to me.

ADINA: Reminding thee that he had *told* thee thou shouldst betray him?

SIMON: Nay, Adina, it was not that his eyes did speak.

ADINA: What then?

SIMON: I dare not tell thee—yet I *heard* the words—there in the black darkness of my shame, I *heard* the words his eyes spake to my heart.

ADINA (*Gently*) What did thy heart hear, my Simon?

SIMON: All night in the bitter darkness, all day in the cruel light, I have heard them ringing, ringing, ringing. Oh, that I could hide me from their sound!

ADINA: Tell me the words, my husband.

SIMON: His look was full of sorrow, yet it seemed not pity for *himself* that his own familiar friend in whom he trusted, who had eaten his bread and salt, had lifted up his heel against him. I

cannot tell thee how it was, but, swift as an arrow, *my heart* received those ringing words his eyes sent forth. It was as if he said: "Thou art *Peter*, the *Rock*. On *thee* will I build the structure of my Truth." *Those* are the words that mock my weak and ugly soul. (*He stands looking up as if he heard again the words*) The Rock! On thee will I build the structure of **my Truth!**

MAGDALA (*Who has listened attentively*) When my black and hideous sin did crush me to the earth, he said: "Even *now*, Magdala, there springs within thee a fountain of pure water that shall cleanse the earth. From thy dark despair shall many rise to hope." Beneath the muddy waters of my life, *he* saw the crystal fountain, and, Peter, through *thy* weakness *he* seeth strength.

SIMON (*Sadly*) A woman, thou, and yet thou didst not leave him. Thou wast brave and loyal to the end.

MAGDALA: Yet have I been disloyal to every tie that binds a woman's heart.

SIMON: Oh, the mockery of his look!

ADINA: I cannot *think of* Jesus' face with *mockery* upon it.

SIMON: Nay, Adina, the mockery is in my shameful heart.

MAGDALA: How *looked* he when those words shot from his eyes?

SIMON: Magdala, it was as if he said: "Thou wilt suffer, Peter, for thou hast done a shameful thing, but in thy dark despair *forget not* thou art the Rock on which the building of my Truth shall rise."

ADINA (*Quietly as if puzzling it out*) Thou art the Rock.

MAGDALA: Simon, it was thou thyself that didst first tell to me *he* said that God is love.

SIMON: There is no love in all the universe to forgive such sin as mine.

ADINA (*Staring at him, then reaching out her arms to him in sudden joy*) Yet I, who am but a foolish girl, have love enough!

SIMON (*Sadly*) Dost thou not hate me, Adina?

ADINA: Nay, Peter, I hate thee not. When first I knew thy cowardice, I thought my love had died, but, when I saw thy need of food—not knowing what I did—I arose and brought thee meat, and, *in the bringing*, I did know I loved thee still.

SIMON: Yet thou didst ever scorn a coward.

ADINA: 'Tis not the coward in thee I love.

SIMON (*Bitterly*) 'Tis all there *is* of me.

ADINA: Nay, Peter, else could I not love thee still.

SIMON: Thou *canst* not love me, Adina. I am too vile.

ADINA (*Simply*) Nay, but I do.

SIMON: In all the world there is no baseness like unto mine. He was my friend and I did love him. (*He breaks down weeping*) O God, that I could die!

MAGDALA (*With sudden understanding*) Yet must thou live and teach his Truth.

SIMON: *I?* I, teach? I who am the utter fool of all the earth?

MAGDALA: Still shalt thou fish for men.

SIMON: If thou hadst ever suffered, woman, thou couldst not mock me thus.

MAGDALA: I mock thee not, Peter. 'Tis only those who suffer that God doth set to fish for men.

SIMON: I am so weak, so utterly degraded, that there is left to me no single gift that I should speak to men.

MAGDALA: 'Tis only when the flood doth sweep away the props of thy self-love that thou canst find the *secret* strength.

SIMON: Oh, that I could find refuge from my sin, that I could flee away from the meanness of my soul!

MAGDALA: Knock, Peter. The door will open.

SIMON: What door?

MAGDALA: Behind the wall of every life, *he* standeth. *He* looketh forth at the windows. *He* showeth himself at the lattice.

SIMON (*With eager humility*) Thinkest thou, Magdala, there is some secret source of strength that can infuse my weakness?

MAGDALA: Peter, I know there is. (*Her voice rings with faith and understanding*) 'Twas for that very thing he came, that *life* should be *to us* in greater fullness.

SIMON (*Humbly*) O Magdala, what *is* that source?

MAGDALA: It is the source that Jesus sought.

SIMON (*A gleam of memory coming into his dull eyes*) Ah! *That* was why he climbed the mountain top!

MAGDALA: Dost not remember, Simon, oft when we questioned him, he said: "It is not I—it is the Father within me that doeth the works"?

SIMON (*Slowly*) "I of myself can do nothing." Those were his words.

MAGDALA: 'Tis ever thus with every child of God.

SIMON: But, Magdala, I am so vile. Thinkest thou his tabernacle can ever be builded in *me* again?

MAGDALA: It will be builded with *joy*, and in thee shall he make *glad* those that are captive to despair.

SIMON: I of myself can do nothing. O God, I know it now. I am empty and undone. Within my worthless self is there *no* good. The Rock I *thought* to build the Master's kingdom on hath crumbled into dust. Worthless and undone, shall Jehovah speak his Truth through *me*? Oh, Magdala, I *dare* not hope.

MAGDALA: 'Tis only the empty vessel that God *can* fill.

SIMON (*Standing with arms outstretched and speaking in a voice of tense entreaty*) I am empty: Jehovah fill me. I am weak. O Master, give me strength. (*He stands a moment, his face strained with longing. Suddenly a light breaks over it and great joy comes upon him.*) O God, what flame of fire is this I feel within my veins? (*With a ringing shout*) It is eternal strength! O Friend, in me shall thy truth live! O Jesus—Master—at last, I understand, I am Peter, the Rock.

CURTAIN



THE GOOD SAMARITAN

from

THE LAMP \*

BY

ANITA B. FERRIS

\* Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work, Wither-spoon Building, Philadelphia, 30 cents.

## CHARACTERS

MAN,  
THREE ROBBERS,  
PRIEST,  
GOOD SAMARITAN,  
LEVITE,  
INNKEEPER,  
SERVANT AT THE INN  
*(Boy or Girl).*

} Older Intermediates or Seniors.

The number of robbers and servants at the inn may be increased if a larger cast is desired; or the number of robbers may be decreased.

PLACE: Road from Jerusalem to Jericho.

TIME: Late afternoon.

## THE GOOD SAMARITAN

**MUSIC:** For the entrance of the man and the robbers the low part of Chopin's "Funeral March," or "Ase's Death," by Edward Grieg, or preferably any good storm music, beginning very low and far away for the entrance of the man, becoming more tempestuous for the robbery, and again dying away in the distance when the man is left to his fate. For the pantomime of the entrance of the priest, the Hebrew traditional music, "Shma Ysrael," is very softly played. This same Hebrew music is continued for the pantomime of the Levite, the Levite singing the old Hebrew words for the entrance and the exit. The same music is continued instrumentally for the entrance of the Good Samaritan, until the speaking begins.

**LIGHT:** Full amber flood. Or, a more elaborate lighting may be tried, the scene being dim and threatening at the entrance of the man and during the robbery, and turning to sunlight again with the entrance and assistance of the Good Samaritan.

**ACTION:** *Low music mutters in the distance. Enter the MAN slowly and fearfully from stage L, audience R. He carries a bundle on his shoulders and a staff in his hand. He advances and looks about, pausing a second each time as he surveys the scene. When the MAN is nearly stage center, he thinks he hears a noise behind him. He starts violently and looks back. While he is crouching and looking back, swiftly and silently his foes steal upon him in front.*

*The MAN gives one muffled scream, as his cloak is twisted around his head and his staff wrenches out of his hand. He is then struck repeatedly with the short clubs of the ROBBERS until he is quiet.*

*Next his bundle is taken, his sandals are stripped from his feet,*

*his cloak is torn off and finally his coat is taken, leaving him in a short white undertunic only. Even his head covering is removed, and he is left seemingly insensible. He should lie on his back, one arm flung out helplessly, as the ROBBERS have left him. The THIEVES should rehearse thoroughly so there is no confusion in their work by two men attempting to do the same thing.*

*The THIEVES confer a moment, and then steal off stage R, the way they came. The music should cover this entire action.*

*Enter from stage L, audience R, the PRIEST. He moves slowly and with dignity in time to the Hebrew music, his hands piously folded, his eyes upon the ground. Suddenly he spies the wounded man. He looks around in a concerned way, as if he fears he may be in personal danger. Then, drawing his robes about him and skirting the man with as wide a detour as possible, he quickens his step and, without one backward glance, walks with dignity off stage R, audience L.*

*There is an interval of a moment when only the Hebrew music is faintly heard. Then comes the sound of singing in the distance. It grows louder and the LEVITE enters, singing the Hebrew words from a scroll held in his hands.*

*"Shma Ysrael, Adonai Elohenu; Adonai Eshod!  
Shma Ysrael, Adonai Elohenu; Adonai Eshod!"*

*Suddenly the LEVITE too, sees the MAN. He ceases his singing abruptly, and with curiosity goes over and examines him but does not touch him. Slowly he shakes his head, and then he too passes by "on the other side," unconcernedly taking up the temple music again as he goes off stage R, audience L.*

*Again there is an interval, covered only by the instrumental Hebrew music, and the SAMARITAN enters from the stage L, audience R. If a donkey can be used for this scene, so much the better. If neither stage arrangement nor opportunity permit the use of an animal, the SAMARITAN simply walks on, his traveler's staff in his hand. He stops, startled as the other men*

*have been, at the sight of the robbed man. He hurries forward, kneeling by his side, the side farthest from the audience, so that the action can be seen. He places his hand over the man's heart, lifts his head, takes his water bottle from his girdle, and pours wine between the man's lips. The victim sighs and moves. The music becomes silent*

MAN: Where—am—I?

SAMARITAN: Here by the roadside, friend. (*He tears a strip from the bottom of his undertunic and binds up the man's head, wetting the bandage from one of his bottles*)

MAN: Who—are you?

SAMARITAN: I am your neighbor, friend.

MAN (*In a low voice*) A Samaritan! (*Slowly and gravely the SAMARITAN bows. Suddenly and jerkily the man sits up and looks about him in fear*) Are they gone?

SAMARITAN: Who?

MAN: The robbers! I remember now. They beat me and stripped me and took all that I possessed. I have nothing—nothing—and I am far from my home. Do not leave me, though I am an Hebrew!

SAMARITAN: I leave thee—sick and naked and alone?

MAN: But the others did. I saw them, though I had lost the strength to move or call out to them. Yea, it seemed to my confused senses that they were holy men from mine own city—a priest and a Levite.

SAMARITAN: Hast thy strength returned so that thou canst lean upon me?

MAN (*Leaning heavily upon the SAMARITAN as he rises*) Yea, if thou dost not lead me far.

SAMARITAN: There is an inn hard by. (*As they move slowly across the stage, toward the exit, stage R, audience L*) I will take thee there and leave thee.

MAN: But I have no money!

SAMARITAN: Fret not thyself—

MAN: Ah! The earth swims about me and my limbs fail under me. I can go no farther! (*He slips down upon the floor, the SAMARITAN supporting him*)

SAMARITAN: Ho! Innkeeper, help! Help!

INNKEEPER (*Answering behind scenes*) Who calls?

SAMARITAN: Travelers in distress!

INNKEEPER (*With SERVANT at entrance stage R, audience L*) Aye, where?

SAMARITAN: Here!

INNKEEPER (*Running to them*) Ah!

SAMARITAN: The man has fallen among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed leaving him half dead. I pray you carry him into the inn.

INNKEEPER (*Stiffening*) But I keep no free hospital for unfortunate travelers!

SAMARITAN (*Pulling his money bag from his girdle*) Here are two shillings; take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee.

INNKEEPER (*Humbly*) It shall be done as my master commands.

MAN (*As INNKEEPER and SERVANT lift him and turn him so that he faces the SAMARITAN, in order to carry him in to the inn*) And thou art a Samaritan!

SAMARITAN: I am thy neighbor.

MAN: Neighbor art thou, indeed!

(*Lights out to blot out scene or music to cover the very short exit.*)



A SINNER BELOVED \*

BY

PHILLIPS ENDECOTT OSGOOD

\* Privately printed. Consult author at St. Mark's Church, Minneapolis.  
Royalty.

## THE CHARACTERS

THE SPIRIT OF WRATHFUL CONDEMNATION.

THE SPIRIT OF REDEMPTIVE LOVE.

(Symbolic, abstract figures of the Prologue and Epilogue.)

THE PROPHET HOSEA. (Whose name means "Salvation.")

GOMER, Daughter of Diblaim, His Errant Wife.

THEIR CHILDREN:

JEZREEL, the first-born, a Son. (Whose name signifies "A Place of Blood.")

LO-RUHAMAH, A Daughter. (Whose name means "No-More-Mercy.") She is later renamed Ruhamah ("Abiding Mercy").

LO-AMMI, the Little Boy. (Whose name means "Not My People.") He is later renamed Ammi ("Still My People").

GAAL, called The Adversary. Prophet-in-chief of Baal-Ashtoreth. (His name means "Abomination.")

TWO MERCHANTS.

A BEDOUIN SHEIKH.

THE SELLER OF SLAVES.

People of Samaria, Idlers, Merchants, Householders, Votaries of Ashtoreth, etc., etc.

THE TIME: That of Jeroboam, the Son of Joash, King of Israel.

## A SINNER BELOVED

THE MARKET-PLACE of the City of Samaria is a wide, irregular space, picturesque with awnings and flapping banners. Against a stretch of brown wall at the back is the "slave-dais," a stepped platform of stone, worn into hollows by the feet of generations of bondservants.

THE TEMPLE OF ASHTORETH is to be thought of as a short way up the street to the left of the Market-Place. The city is to be thought of as principally off at the right)

(At either side of the scene, framing it in, stands a high pillar, with a bowl of incense upon its capital. The incense in the left bowl burns darkly and smokily, with many sparks. The incense in the bowl at the right burns steadily, with a thin blue spiral of smoke.

### I. PROLOGUE

The PROPHET HOSEA enters first. He is swathed from head to foot in a night-black cloak. He kneels upon the slave-dais: With eyes tight shut and hands tight-clenched, the PROPHET prays.

The SPIRIT OF WRATHFUL CONDEMNATION enters. He is clothed in dull red and is armed with a scourge. He mounts the slave-dais and stands arrogantly upon it.

The SPIRIT OF REDEMPTIVE LOVE enters, clothed in white. He takes his stand below the steps of the slave-dais. He carries a cross-topped staff. The SPIRIT OF WRATH and the SPIRIT OF LOVE face each other over the bowed head of the PROPHET, challengingly, antagonist-fashion.

THE SPIRIT OF WRATH : This man is mine.

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE : He shall not be for always.

WRATH : I rule him. His voice of prophecy is my voice.

LOVE: But even now, O Spirit of Wrathful Condemnation, his *heart* is not enslaved to thee. He speaketh words of bitter judgment on this sinning people; but beneath his words of angry judgment beateth the pulse of a good-will which belongeth unto *me*!

WRATH: I am the wrath of God; the flaming, ruthless indignation of an outraged Lord. His people hath broken its wedlock-covenant with Jehovah. It is an evil and a faithless generation. That nation unto which the One, True God had married Himself, hath iniquitously forsaken Him and turned to other gods. Which are no gods. This people seeketh its adulterous, traitorous joy in ways Jehovah the Righteous abhorreth. Can there be aught but words of passionate resentment from on High? (*He brandishes the scourge above HOSEA and commands*) What saith the Lord, O Prophet of the Lord? Speak thou for me a word of wrath!

HOSEA (*Kneeling with haggard face and halting voice*) Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel; for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land; because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee. Seeing thou has forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. Thou hast sowed the wind, and thou shalt reap the whirlwind. God will cast thee away. Thus saith Jehovah, thy covenant-God!

THE SPIRIT OF WRATH: This man is mine. His voice of prophecy is my voice.

LOVE: Nevertheless, O Spirit of Wrath, his *heart* is mine. His lips, mayhap, are thine to use, but they speak hollow words. This man hath no satisfaction in this his utterance. His *soul* is not thine abject slave, but free for God to claim and guide. And God shall give his heart to me!

WRATH: He speaketh Truth. Can God love a wanton sinner, defiant of truth unto his Lord?

LOVE: Can God take back a love once given?

WRATH (*Whirling his scourge*) This Prophet of Jehovah's ire shall curse Israel in the name of Him who is all wrathful judgment.

LOVE (*Mounting the dais and speaking imperiously*) I have a controversy with thee, thou angry spirit. Down from this place of mastery. Thou shalt not have this man for thine own. *I challenge thee, set this man free but one brief hour to be but himself, not thy bondsman and see whether he doth not choose me for his guide and guard, forswearing thee. I challenge thee.*

WRATH: So sure am I that only wrath is righteous I take thy challenge. Let him follow his instincts of God. See! (*He steps down from the platform*) I am not his enslaver. Naturally did he come to me, and by instinct will he cleave to me yet. He is free. Let what will come, come! Thou and I will wrestle for possession of his conscience, in the name of the God of his faith. His intuitions shall make the award. So be it! Amen!

LOVE: Amen and amen! So be it!

(HOSEA rises, steps down from the slave-dais, his loosening cloak revealing the white tunic beneath it. He stands straight, his arms outstretched. His face lifts. He speaks to Jehovah)

HOSEA: Oh Lord my God, there is no Saviour beside Thee. Teach me Thy thoughts!

(*The SPIRIT OF WRATH steps down to the left pillar, with its smudge-fire atop, and sits at its base. He hangs his scourge on the pillar above his head. The SPIRIT OF LOVE steps to the right-hand pillar, with its serenely-burning incense, and sits to watch. He leans his cross against the pillar. These two remain, symbolic, silent figures, watching all which now transpires. HOSEA goes to the extreme back (R) of the playing-space and seats himself, facing the Market-Place, watching. A chorus of chanting voices somewhere to the right begins to sing*)

"Show me Thy ways, O Lord; and teach me Thy paths.  
Call to remembrance, O Lord, thy tender mercies and  
Thy loving-kindnesses, which have been ever of old.

The secret of the Lord is among them that fear Him,  
And He will show them His covenant.

Unto Thee, O Lord, will I lift up my soul; my God,  
I have put my trust in Thee.

Amen."

## II. THE INCIDENT

*As HOSEA sits watching, the frequenters of the Market-Place drift in. They gossip in groups, chatter at the booths of the merchants; they eye the seated prophet and with one accord avoid him, ostentatiously.*

*At the booth of a merchant (left-front) is a desert-sheikh a-bargaining. Behind his hands he speaks to the two merchants serving him.*

THE SHEIKH: Who is yon lonely man? And why do all the folk avoid him so?

THE FIRST MERCHANT: He is the Prophet Hosea.

THE SECOND MERCHANT: A scold, in the name, he says, of Jehovah.

THE FIRST MERCHANT: The sun does not seem to shine warmly wherever he is. We shiver when he comes.

THE SHEIKH: He is a Prophet of your God?

THE SECOND MERCHANT: If God is a God of cursing and vinegar vengeance.

THE FIRST MERCHANT: Yes, if.

THE SHEIKH: You have your doubts?

BOTH MERCHANTS (*Laughing*) We have.

THE SHEIKH: When one can choose so much more pleasant gods, it is lunatic to choose a God all of anger. I came past the grove of Ashtoreth but now: Ashtoreth seems to lack no worshipers. See, this garland was flung about my neck by two unveiled houris, who laughingly urged me to come back to today's revel. Their lips were very red,—and very warm!

THE FIRST MERCHANT: You tried them? (*Laughs*) Why not?

THE SHEIKH: Somehow I pity this austere prophet. He looks yearningly at everyone who passes. He is lonely. What is his story? Do you know it at all?

THE FIRST MERCHANT: Oh, his story is an open scroll to all the city. From a boy the wing of misfortune has shadowed him. From the time when his father, who was a princeling of the tribe of Reuben, was carried off by the accursed Assyrians.

THE SECOND MERCHANT: His father died in exile, mourning the pricked bubble of his happiness.

THE FIRST MERCHANT: Hosea, fatherless and penniless, was sheltered by the "Sons of the Prophets" and was apprenticed to the Prophet's trade. Still almost a boy, he married just the girl he least should have chosen. A fly-away, quicksilver witch. Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, my cousin. "Scarlet Butterfly," we nicknamed her.

THE SECOND MERCHANT: She was once my playmate. Even then she claimed joy was her birthright. I remember how her eyes shone and her teeth flashed through her veil as she whirled in the dance to our drumming! (*He sighs*) Poor Gomer! Joy her birthright!

THE SHEIKH: Why do you sigh, friend? Might it be that you yourself would fain have been that birthright of joy to her?

THE SECOND MERCHANT: I admit it, O Sheikh of the Desert. But it was not to be. Yet there was something about her seemed symbolic. She was ever our own desire for joy made incarnate.

Her vivid lightheartedness was like our own desire made articulate.

THE SHEIKH: I will take all these. Wait a moment for my caravan-servants.

(*The SHEIKH rises and beckons to his caravan-slaves.*

*He loads them with what he has purchased and sends them to his camp. They exit L)*

(*The SHEIKH stands watching HOSEA, while the merchants continue to answer him. Returning to his questioning)*

THE SHEIKH: You hint at a tragedy.

THE FIRST MERCHANT: It was bound to come. Was ever a pair so mismated as that gloomy Prophet and blithe, perfumed Gomer!

THE SECOND MERCHANT: For breakfast, dinner and supper and all the time between, her brooding husband hoarsely rehearsed the sins of this nation. We had adulterously broken the wedlock-covenant twixt Jehovah and Israel. We had permitted the temples to Baal. We had devoted ourselves to Ashtoreth. With endless increase of exasperation he harped on the wrath of Jehovah.

THE FIRST MERCHANT: Can you imagine Gomer sitting and hearing his tirades with her spirit craving flowers and sleekness and dancing and gayety?

THE SHEIKH: Were there children?

THE SECOND MERCHANT: Three, each pitiful child cursed with a name of God's bitterness.

THE SHEIKH: She ran away?

THE FIRST MERCHANT: The Scarlet Butterfly flew away. She sold herself for a song to Gaal the chief priest of Ashtoreth. He is mighty in the counsels of the King. Hosea calls him The Adversary.

THE SHEIKH: For gold and gayety and garlands,—a life!

THE SECOND MERCHANT: So far we all know the sorry story. But no farther. Gomer disappeared out of the bondage of Gaal. We saw her in the groves of Ashtoreth for a few months. Then she vanished into thin air.

THE FIRST MERCHANT: Perhaps she is dead.

*(There is a sudden tumult of cries outside the Market-Place. One can distinguish such taunts as these)*  
 Go tell your father to change your cursing names!  
 Thus saith the Lord! Forsooth!  
 You three walking condemnations!  
 Jezreel, Jezreel!

Lo-Ruhmah! We shall see!

Get you gone from our sight!

*(The playing-space is almost emptied as the people hasten out toward the sound. HOSEA leaps to his feet and starts toward the R, also, but the tumult quiets. He waits, perplexed and tense. The three children of HOSEA come running in, dodging behind cover when possible. JEZREEL, the eldest, is guarding their retreat)*

JEZREEL: Well, we got away.

LO-RUHAMAH: There's father!

LO-AMMI: Father! Father!

LO-RUHAMAH: Now we're safe!

JEZREEL: Were you not safe with me?

*(The children run to HOSEA, who comes to meet them. They snuggle close to him, beneath his cloak. Except JEZREEL who remains nervously alert, on watch)*

HOSEA: What is the trouble, lambkins?

*(Breathlessly they answer, all at once)*

JEZREEL: They threw stones at us.

LO-RUHAMAH: They hate us so!

LO-AMMI: Why do they throw stones at us?

JEZREEL: Why do they hate us so! We are not to blame for our names.

LO-RUHAMAH: Everyone despises us, father. The boys and girls will never play with us.

JEZREEL: One would think we had the leprosy.

LO-RUHAMAH: We are very lonely, father.

JEZREEL: I hate our names as much as they do. (*Pointing right*)

LO-RUHAMAH: Father dearest, if you did not love us I should want to die.

HOSEA (*With a sudden gust of fierce tenderness. Kneeling and holding them tight*) O my blessed, blessed children three, if I had not you to love, I, too, should want to die.

JEZREEL (*Stubbornly*) Then if you love us, father, why did you name us with names that are our daily curse?

LO-RUHAMAH: You try and try to tell us why. And although my mind understands a little, my heart never takes it in at all.

LO-AMMI: Do you know how hard it is to be lonely?

HOSEA (*To himself, groaningly*) How hard it is to be lonely! O my God! (*There is a moment of silence*)

JEZREEL: Father, I am grown up now,—or almost so. Can you prove to me your first-born, that you are right to name us so? (*Laughingly*) I have a controversy with you. I challenge you!

(*They take the few steps necessary to bring them to the slave-dais; and drop unthinkingly upon it, engrossed in their "controversy"*)

LO-RUHAMAH: Father, does hate do any good?

HOSEA (*Startled*) Daughter, I have begun to ask myself that question lately; and now you read my thoughts! Motherless brood o' mine, once I was ever so sure I knew God's true word. How could it be anything other than blazing wrath? See! Jehovah chose this nation for Himself. He only knows why; but He loved us and by the covenant married Himself to us. Blessing upon blessing would have been ours if this people had kept true to our share in the wedlock of spirit.

JEZREEL (*Bored, but tolerant*) I know all this by heart.

HOSEA (*Disregarding his son*) But woe unto us, we broke faith with Jehovah. We deserted Him. Look, children, there is the tower of Baal's great temple, the false God of things earthly. And beside its gate you can see the boughs of the Grove of Ashtoreth, his mate, sleek Goddess of Pleasure. You may not understand all this means, but at least you can comprehend our great sin:—we turned our backs on our God! We gave ourselves to the poisonous bondage of Creature-Content!

LO-RUHAMAH: Just as mother did to you, father!

HOSEA (*Leaping to his feet. Aghast*) How did you come to know that? Who told you? I did not mean you to know. Have I not told you that the mother you loved is—dead? Dead,—at least to us, dears. Probably dead in the flesh, too. God pity her! And us!

JEZREEL: We have known about mother for months.

HOSEA: How?

JEZREEL: Do you think the rabble hurls only stones at us?

LO-RUHAMAH: They hurl bitter taunts, too.

LO-AMMI: About mother.

JEZREEL: Stones do not bruise half so badly as sneers.

LO-RUHAMAH: About our mother.

JEZREEL: Father, we children do not believe she is dead. We cannot believe God will let her be dead.

LO-RUHAMAH: We were hunting for her today, as we do every day. Oh, just anywhere. When they set upon us. (*She gestures R*)

HOSEA: Forgive me, my poor harried darlings. (*He stoops once more to their level*) I thought but to save you the worst pain of all. The mother you loved *is* dead. She who lives (if she lives) you cannot love. We must renounce her.

LO-RUHAMAH: I am not able.

JEZREEL: You think you are acting as Jehovah acts with his people? And so we are named as we are?

HOSEA: My son, before the days of my sorrow——

LO-RUHAMAH: Is it not ours also?

HOSEA: Before the days of *our* sorrow I was bitter-sure. God could not but be angry that his covenant-mate had betrayed him. I must therefore proclaim His judgment of wrath. You, Jezreel, were my first-born. I vowed you from your girl-mother's arms to be a living word from on High. I named you Jezreel for that place of bloodshed where this kingship started. Your name was to be daily warning that a nation founded on bloodshedding cannot abide.

Things grew worse. Baal and Ashtoreth gathered crowds of worshippers. More than Jehovah. The people sought indulgence and selfishness. Folk must have velvet cloaks, peacock fans, Nubian slaves, red-lipped dancers; hearth-fires, hearty labor, clean-hearted prayer grew unfashionable. Even your mother fondled a necklace of emeralds as much as her baby. You came to her arms, little daughter. Despite her white-lipped pleading I named you too with a name of God's anger, Lo-Ruhamah—"I will have no mercy, saith the Lord."

LO-RUHAMAH: It is a cruel name.

HOSEA: Next Gaal came. Gaal, mine'Adversary. Gaal the arrogant and mighty; Prophet of Baal-Ashtoreth, advisor of the King. Silken and sleek like a panther. Ear-ringed, perfumed, thick of lip, lily-fingered. How persuasive he was!

JEZREEL: We have seen him. With throngs singing about him, scattering rose-petals. Going up thither. (*Pointing left*)

HOSEA: The very day you were born, little son, Gaal won his fell victory; the King went with him to the Temple of Baal-Ashtoreth and offered his sacrifice there. Do you wonder I ruthlessly named this my child Lo-Ammi, "Ye are not my people and I will not be your God, saith Jehovah."

(*There is a moment of silence*)

JEZREEL: And then?

HOSEA (*With a break in his voice, despite himself*) Then? Then came the day when I returned to a house which had been a home and found three wailing babies—but no wife! (*He covers his face*)

JEZREEL: The crowd says my mother sold herself to be the slave of Gaal.

(HOSSEA nods)

LO-RUHAMAH: What does Gaal's name mean?

HOSSEA (*Between set teeth*) "Abomination."

JEZREEL: And rightly! (*With sudden heat*) I abhor and loathe him! I hate this people! *God curse all sinners!*

(HOSSEA'S eyes widen in horror and protest. *He whistles*) NO! NO! NO!

LO-RUHAMAH: Jezreel! Not curse our mother!

JEZREEL: Why not? She sinned. God hates all sin.

LO-RUHAMAH: But not all sinners. (*She stands beside HOSSEA, on tiptoe, her hand above his heart*) Father!

HOSEA: My daughter?

Lo-RUHAMAH (*Emphasizing every word*) Tell me true. Down deep in the bottom of your heart, you cannot hate my mother, can you? I see something in your eyes that says you cannot. Yes, even that you love her still!

HOSEA: I do. And always shall! I have tried to deceive myself. I have not acknowledged it even in my inmost soul until this moment. But it is true. I love her, now and forever. No matter how I hate her sin, my heart is not mine but hers. To do with as she wills. She may betray me, loathe me, crucify me, but I shall go on loving her. I cannot help it, nor can she stop my loving her. I shall love her even in the depths of hell. By the right of inexorable, unremitting love I claim her. My love shall find her, win her, cleanse her, bring her back. She shall be mine again some day. My love, once given, cannot be retracted; it is not given on conditions. It is not mine, but hers, eternally. It must abide faithful even to her, unfaithful. Love is happiest so: to be just—loving! (*He is speaking really to himself*)

Lo-RUHAMAH: Father, are—you—better—than—our—God?

HOSEA (*Gasp*ing a bit) Better than God? Better than God? Jehovah bless you, dearest, for that trusting logic. How blind I have been! God loves as I love! He loves His wedded people as I love Gomer, my wife! Of course! Faithfully, unremittingly, yearningly, redemptively! His love will save us! He Who is Love, cannot stop loving!

JEZREEL: Then our names are not true.

Lo-RUHAMAH: They can be changed.

HOSEA: They shall be.

(*There is a clashing of cymbals, a blare of trumpets, and a turmoil of voices outside at the R. The crowd floods back into the Market-Place. First two trump-*

*eters and two cymbal-players, marching sedately. Then the crier of ASHTORETH, between four standard-bearers. He intones between the trumpetings and clangors)*

THE CRIER: Ashtoreth awaits her votaries at the hour of sunset. Come ye, one and all, to her groves, at the hour of sunset. Laughter and revelry shall reign there, at the hour of sunset. Eat, drink and be merry with the Goddess of Gayety. At the hour of sunset, in the groves of Ashtoreth.

*(Behind the CRIER comes a whirling tangle of priestesses. Dancing. Garlanded. Darting in and out among the people. The CRIER stalks on and out toward the groves. HOSEA steps to the front of the slave-dais and holds up his hand for silence)*

HOSEA: O my people!

*(The crowd grows sullenly quiet)*

*(ONE IN THE CROWD shouts)*

We are not thy people. Nor Jehovah's. You yourself say so!

HOSEA: O my people. Jehovah has spoken a new word in my ears. A renewing word. Of comfort. I have been wrong. I confess it. Jehovah hates your sins; His wrath is steadfast against our breaking of wedlock-covenant with Him; against harlotry of soul with false gods of earthly content.

*(There is an angry murmur, but HOSEA silences it with his lifted hand, and continues)*

But the word of the Lord comes unto me now that He does not hate *you*; He will *not* cast you off, He *will* have mercy. His love once given, He cannot take it back. He abides faithful, whether or no we keep our troth. We are sinners, but despite our sin, sinners beloved. Thus saith the Lord.

*(There is obvious surprise in the crowd. And puzzled pleasure)*

THE FIRST MERCHANT: This is a new Hosea.

THE SECOND MERCHANT: The prophet of a patient God may do much a scolding prophet cannot do.

HOSEA: Harken yet! When these my children were born, I named them with names of God's unsparing wrath, that they might be daily reminders of your condemnation. I, the slave of wrath, put them also in that bondage. Here we stand, on the slave-dais, until this hour beneath the scourge of the Spirit of Bitterness. Now in the sight of all the city I proclaim we are free. We are not the slaves of Anger henceforth; the God of Redemption has freed us. By love, which suffers long and is kind. Therefore in the name of Jehovah, I re-name these children to be living symbols of hope.

Jezreel, your name shall remain Jezreel, but with a new meaning. Still for a shedding of blood, but the blood of redemption. I foresee it!

Lo-Ruhmah, your name shall be Ruhmah, "God will have mercy forever."

Lo-Ammi, little son, from this moment you shall be called Ammi, which means, "Always God's people."

And I, Hosea the Prophet, am not any more the slave of Bitterness, but a voice of God's travailing Love. In the name of Jehovah, I proclaim it. God loves us still. I go to the shrine of Jehovah to make the offerings of a freeman before Him.

(*There is a shout of approval, and a group in the crowd breaks into a chant. HOSEA comes down from the dais, with his children. He leaves his black cloak on the slave-dais*)

#### THE CHANT:

"Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord ; Lord hear my voice.

If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss ; O Lord, who may abide it ?

But there is mercy with Thee : therefore shalt Thou be feared. I look for the Lord : my soul doth wait for him ; in His word is my trust.

O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy:  
and with Him is plenteous redemption.  
And He shall redeem Israel from all His sins."

(While the chant is being sung, HOSEA swings AMMI to his shoulder, and with a child on either side of him comes down through the people toward the front of the playing-space. His eyes are turned upward. He walks as if in a trance. Just as he turns toward the exit the SLAVE-SELLER enters with certain slaves. Among them a woman in a flaming scarlet cloak. The slaves and HOSEA pass within a few feet of each other. As they pass, the woman in red starts violently and suppresses a sob. HOSEA does not see her. She takes an irresolute step toward him, stretches out a wavering hand of entreaty and yearning. But the SELLER OF SLAVES sees this and pushes her none too gently back into line as he herds his slaves to the dais. The SELLER OF SLAVES begins drumming. Then in rhythmical sing-song he intones his nasal refrain)

Come buy you a slave!  
Who is willingly sold  
For something to eat,  
For something to wear,  
For somewhere to sleep,  
For hiding his failure at Life.  
Come buy you a slave.

Come buy you a slave!  
With no will of his own.  
With no life of his own.  
With no soul of his own.  
Come buy you a slave!

(The crowd gathers about the dais, most of the idlers sitting cross-legged on the ground. Not able to buy,

*but grateful for diversion; with all the time in the world on their hands)*

THE SELLER OF SLAVES (*Beginning his regular program*) My Lords, who carry purses heavy with gold and with jewels——

(*There is a burst of laughter. A voice calls*)

A VOICE: If slaves were as cheap as field mice, we have no mites all together to buy even one!

THE SELLER OF SLAVES: *Is there no one here with purpose to buy?* These are unusual slaves——

THE CROWD SHOUTS: NO!

We haven't a shekel!

Sell her in the scarlet for a butterfly's wing and I'll buy her.

(*Laughter all about*)

THE SELLER OF SLAVES: Swine of the gutters! Unclean! Dogs of the vale of Gehenna! Dare you make me ridiculous! I call down curses upon you. May Jehovah's wrath blast you——

A VOICE (*Jocularly*) Enough of that, you who are *not* a seller of slaves here today. The Prophet has a new word about that. Jehovah's wrath is not upon us, after all. The Prophet forbids hate in the name of Jehovah. Be silent!

(*There is an awkward pause. The SLAVE-SELLER does not quite know what to do. Off to the R are heard voices of a few men, singing the Hymn of Ashtoreth*)

Day and night be merry!

Daily celebrate a feast!

Day and night be merry!

Ashtoreth! Ashtoreth!

Daughter of the moon!

Ashtoreth! Ashtoreth!

Ashtoreth! is our Heavenly Queen!

A VOICE: Gaal comes!

(GAAL and his companions enter, dressed with festal gayety. His companions carry standards. GAAL is a

*powerful, black-bearded 'Assyrian, clothed with sumptuous, bespangled silks and velvets. He is sleek, lithe, dominant. The crowd kneels as he comes)*

THE SELLER OF SLAVES: O Gaal, Prophet and Priest of Baal-Ashtoreth, I do obeisance to you. You go to the temple? Is it presuming to ask whether there may be need of new slaves for the Groves?

GAAL: Seller of Slaves, we have no use for slaves such as yours. We do not *buy* slaves; our slaves *give* themselves to us. For baubles they think make them happy. They *have* their reward. The rose-garlands we bind on their necks lose their petals; iron chains are beneath the rose-petals. Why should I *buy* slaves when I can get all I want for a song and a laugh?

THE SELLER OF SLAVES: Nevertheless—sire——

GAAL (*Suddenly noting GOMER*) Wait! That woman wears the scarlet of Ashtoreth's slaves. Let her stand forth.

*(The SLAVE-MASTER pulls her forward and orders all the other slaves to the ground. GOMER clutches her cloak tight about her, muffling her face)*

GAAL: Strip off that cloak!

GOMER: No! No! No!

GAAL: Let's see her face. (*He strides forward and pulls the red cloak down from her face. GOMER stands with closed eyes, in agony of shame*)

GAAL: Gomer!

THE CROWD: Gomer! Wife of the Prophet! Hosea's wife!

GAAL: Blessed be Ashtoreth! Gomer!! (*He gloats*) Back from the dead. Runaway wife. Then runaway slave. Now on the slave-block once more! (*He waits for her to answer. But she does not*) Ashtoreth brought you back. Back to my power. Back to the bondage you loathe. The lure of pleasure and softness and vanities brought you back!

GOMER (*Slowly, looking him squarely in the eyes*) Gaal, you lie. I came back only to steal some secret glimpse of my children. I had to see them or die. Love brought me back——

GAAL: They do not love you. They have forgotten you—(*Insultingly*) you who are dead.

GOMER: My love is not dead. It is all there is of me that lives (*To herself*) And that cannot die.

GAAL: And as for Hosea, the Prophet, who once was your husband——

GOMER: Before you poisoned my peace.

GAAL: As for your husband, he has hardened his heart. You are a leper to him.

GOMER: I am neither asking nor hoping that anyone should love *me*. But no one can hinder my loving whom I will.

GAAL: You are coming back to the bondage of Ashtoreth.

GOMER: I am not.

GAAL: I can buy you for the price of a sparrow.

GOMER: Gaal, once and for all understand me. There was once a time, to be sure, when I craved self-indulgence. I yearned for a carefree, silken existence. To the music of languorous laughter, immune from all duties. You justified to me my vapid desires with your pagan scorn of all seriousness. You sneered my conscience to silence. You offered a Paradise of the earth, earthly, just for the gift of myself to Ashtoreth. The grieving anger of Hosea angered me. I fled to the grove of Ashtoreth. And to you!

GAAL (*Laughing contemptuously*) I remember that spider-web day.

GOMER: But you kept no Paradise-promises. You walled me into a world all of petty jealousy, sensitiveness, cruelty, hypocrisy. Softness turned hard. You starved my real life. I was chained

to the wine-press. I realized at last This was Sin I had sinned. I was a prodigal. I had died. Yet what did you care? You sneered at my bitter awakening and laughed at my desolation. But there came a midnight of miracle. My will struggled through death to enough resurrection to claim its freedom from you and from yours. I came to myself. Yes, even by the pains of the hell of my disillusioning I was freed from it. My longings at least were at liberty. You were no longer Master of *me*. Stumbling, blindly, groping, breathless I fled from the Nightmare of You. (*Quietly*) I may never again be loved. But I am free to love whom I will. Without thought or hope of return, my soul belongs to those whom I cannot help loving. Humbly, penitently, patiently, selflessly. I give them all I have, all I am, whether they know it or care. (*Strongly again*) You may trammel my body once more. You may think you enslave me again. But, O Gaal the Adversary, harken to me. You have no power at all over me. You may chain my body to a treadmill of pain; you may stretch my flesh on the rack; you may crucify this my body; but—you—cannot—touch—me! You cannot reach my will. You cannot lay hands on my spirit. You cannot kill my love. I will do what I will with my soul. I am scatheless of you: heaven-high above your utmost grasp. My life is my own; I will forth-give my *self* as I choose and you cannot come near me to stop me.

GAAL: But—Gomer—I—I—

GOMER (*She laughs—exultant*) God pity the ridiculous failure you are. I am free of you as the wind; I go where I list. You are defeat! I am victory! You are slavery: I am liberty! You are earth: I am soul! *For I love!*

(GOMER stops for very breathlessness. And just as she pauses, HOSEA enters, with his children. AMMI again on his shoulder. HOSEA sees GOMER. His hand goes to his heart. He and GOMER look steadily into each other's eyes, over the heads of the awed crowd.

*Then HOSEA turns his gaze to GAAL. His jaw tightens. He sets his little boy down and steps to where GAAL stands. He confronts him—in silence)*

GAAL (*Narrowing his eyes*) Yonder is a runaway harlot for sale.

HOSEA: She is my wife.

*(The children run to HOSEA. Eagerly but waiting his word)*

GAAL: She was your wife.

HOSEA: I said, *She is* my wife, Gaal.

JEZREEL (*To his father*) On the slave-block!

RUHAMAH: Father, can we buy her back? Do you want her?

*(HOSEA wordlessly answers. It comes to GOMER what HOSEA means to do)*

GAAL (*To the SLAVE-SELLER*) I bid for this woman.

HOSEA: Gaal, mine Adversary, you shall not have her.

THE SELLER OF SLAVES (*Unctuously*) How much will my lords bid?

HOSEA: I am a poor man, well-nigh penniless, but I will give every whit I possess. Fifteen pieces of silver, and an homer of barley and an half-homer of barley, all my substance. With all my living I would redeem her whom I love.

GAAL (*Laughing*) Fifteen pieces of silver and an homer of barley and an half-homer of barley! By the laughter of Ashtoreth's red lips, how absurd! Here, Seller of Slaves, here is a spare-bag of gold pieces. Give me the woman.

THE SLAVE SELLER: Money is money.

*(The children break through the crowd, and throw themselves upon GOMER, who clutches them close, kissing them as though famished)*

HOSEA (*Turning to the people*) Listen, my people. Shall a bag of gold pieces prevail against God? Money is not only money.

It means what it *means*. Gaal's gold is easily spared: it has none of the worth and the power of sacrifice. My few silver pieces are my veriest life. Gaal's gold is the curse of Ashtoreth. My silver is the symbol of redemptive love from on High. Shall mine adversary buy Jehovah's child from Him with a bag of gold dirt from the hoard of Ashtoreth?

*(The crowd breaks into a pandemonium of shouts.)*

The MERCHANTS leading)

Give Hosea his wife!

Gaal shall not have her!

Hosea outbids his enemy!

No good luck will be yours, if you give her to Gaal!

She is Hosea's by right!

*(The SLAVE-MASTER hesitates. He reaches out a tentative hand toward GAAL)*

THE SELLER OF SLAVES: I dare not sell her to you. I am afraid.

*(Speciously)* And besides, I cannot sell her soul. She has told you that she is free of you, whatever befalls.

GAAL: There is my bag of gold. Be common-sense. Stop this lunacy.

Give me the woman. My gold is worth more than this idiot prophet of Jehovah can offer.

*(The crowd breaks out again)*

It is not!

What is a bag of gold!

There goes no life with the bag of Gold!

Slink away, Gaal! Begone!

Let the man have his wife!

GAAL (*Fronting the crowd*) Baal-Ashtoreth curse you! *(He reaches for GOMER. The three children leap to defend her)*

RUHAMAH: She belongs to us who love her.

JEZREEL: God gives her to us!

AMMI: You shall not touch my mother.

HOSEA: Seller of Slaves. You dare not defy redemptive love.  
(Pointing to his children) Jehovah is in it. He has spoken.

GAAL (*Baffled; turning in his rage to the Slave-Seller*) Decide!

THE SELLER OF SLAVES: I cannot. (*Seeking desperately for an expedient, he exclaims*) I set her free. She may go as she wills. And whither she chooses.

(*The crowd bursts into angry tumult against GAAL, hooting him out of the Market-Place!*)

GOMER: Jehovah! My Saviour! My Redeemer!

(*HOSEA reaches up and takes GOMER's hand. He aids her from the slave-dais. But when he would draw her to him, she slips through his arms and kneels, covering her face*)

(*GAAL and his companions slink out—L*)

GOMER: I am a sinner.

HOSEA: But a sinner beloved. Free of your bondage. . .

GOMER: Hosea, my husband! Your name is rightly "Salvation."

HOSEA: O Gomer my wife! Jehovah has taught me His love through my own. I cannot but claim you, for always. (*He raises her, kisses her reverently on the forehead, and turns to the people whom he had forgotten*) All this has happened here in your sight. Perhaps it is ordained of God for a witness of Him. Return to Jehovah. He has not ceased from loving you. For He cannot thus stop. He is our Redeemer,—by unwearying love.

(*Someone in the crowd begins to sing*)

"O Lord thou hast searched me and known me: thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising: thou understandest my thoughts long before."

(*The crowd rises and joins in the chant, marching out presently toward the Temple of Jehovah*)

"If I climb up into Heaven, thou art there: if I go down to hell thou art there also.

If I take the wings of the morning and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea  
Even there also shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me.  
If I say, peradventure the darkness shall cover me; then shall my night be turned into day.  
Try me, O God, and seek the depths of my heart; prove me and examine my thoughts.  
Look well, if there be any way of wickedness in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

Amen."

### III. EPILOGUE

*As the crowd leaves the Market-Place the SPIRIT OF WRATHFUL CONDEMNATION rises. Also the SPIRIT OF REDEMPTIVE LOVE. As the chant dies away they speak to each other across the playing space.*

THE SPIRIT OF WRATHFUL CONDEMNATION: This man is thine.

THE SPIRIT OF REDEMPTIVE LOVE: But not mine alone.

WRATH: He loveth——

LOVE: He loveth human souls. But therefore he hateth——

WRATH: The sins which enslave them.

LOVE: With an unwearying, holy hatred for sins——

WRATH: And with an unwearying, holy love for souls.

LOVE: Give him thy scourge. To cleanse the Temple of Life, of Abominations.

WRATH: Give him thy cross. To lay down his life. For his friends.

TOGETHER: Prophesy for us, thou whose name is Salvation.

HOSEA (*With his arm about his wife and the children grouped about them*) Thus saith the Lord thy redeemer:

"I will heal thine iniquities. I will love thee freely, O Israel. I will allure thee and speak comfortably unto thee. I will betroth thee to me forever; yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment and loving-kindness and in mercies. I will betroth thee to me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord. I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people, and they shall say, Thou art my God. And it shall be that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me My husband. Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer."

(*The people, outside, break into the Gloria*)

Glory be to the Father  
And to the Son  
And to the Holy Ghost—  
As it was in the beginning,  
Is now,  
And ever shall be,  
World without end.

Amen.

# THE RESURRECTION \*

An Easter Service

ARRANGED BY

ROSAMOND KIMBALL

\* Production of this service should not be attempted from this text. Those desiring to produce the service should secure copies (35 cents each) from Samuel French, Publisher, New York. Information concerning the carols and the selections from the Passion Music are published in the Samuel French edition.

## CHARACTERS

PILATE

TWO ROMAN SOLDIERS

THE CENTURION

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHÆA

TWO CHIEF PRIESTS

TWO OR THREE PHARISEES

PETER, a Disciple

JOHN, a Disciple

MARY the Mother of James

SALOME

MARY MAGDALENE

TWO ANGELS

THE VOICE OF JESUS

## SCENES

PRELUDE—THE CRUCIFIXION.

- I. THE AUDIENCE CHAMBER OF PONTIUS PILATE.
- II. THE GUARD AT THE SEPULCHRE.
- III. THE WOMEN AT THE SEPULCHRE.
- IV. THE DISCIPLES AT THE SEPULCHRE.

## COSTUMES

PILATE wears a white Roman toga bordered with scarlet. The High Priests should not wear their priestly robes in coming to PILATE, but they should be richly dressed, preferably in purple robes over white. A gorgeous ornament can be hung about the neck. The headdress is a silk scarf for a turban. There is also an ornamental girdle.

The Pharisees wear any rich color combination.

The soldiers wear short, full skirts of brown or red. Their helmets can be made of pasteboard covered with silver paper or painted, also belts made of the same to represent armor. They carry spears.

MARY MAGDALENE may wear white and red or white and blue.

JOHN is usually dressed in white with a belt and turban of another color.

PETER wears brown or blue as the predominating color.

The ANGELS are dressed in white cheese cloth robes with long, flowing sleeves. There are narrow gold bands about their foreheads. Each one may carry an Easter lily. They have no wings.

## THE SEPULCHRE

The sides of the sepulchre are made with screens. Blankets are stretched over the top and covered with some soft gray material to look like stone. Dark blue mosquito netting can line the inside, giving a softer tone for the interior. The screens should be curved so that there is a space on each side of the entrance for the angels to stand concealed. Within the sepulchre is a bench covered with a sheet to represent the marble bier. On the bier are laid the linen cloths. It must be so arranged that the interior of the sepulchre can be lighted

*with electricity, the lights being in the two corners on each side of the entrance. Pine boughs can be laid upon the top and down the sides.*

#### PREPARATION FOR THE SERVICE

*Four or five rehearsals should be all that is necessary in order not to lose the spontaneity and the atmosphere of reverence which must be felt by the actors. All those who take part in it must know that it is not so much what they do as what they themselves feel, that is of first importance. It rests with them to create the atmosphere which like a garment of light will clothe the whole service. Let the actors read the Resurrection story again and again during the time of preparation until they feel that they themselves have become part of it in the deepest sense.*

## THE RESURRECTION

### PRELUDE—THE CRUCIFIXION

(*The organ softly plays Selection I of the Passion Music during the following reading. The READER stands behind the scenes; only the voice is heard*)

READER: And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him.

And there were two thieves crucified with Him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

Then said Jesus, Father forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment and cast lots.

And Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was, *Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews*.

And it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

Then said the Chief Priests of the Jews to Pilate—write not, the King of the Jews, but that He said I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Caiaphas, and Mary Magdalene.

And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided Him, saying, He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the chosen of God.

And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him, and offering Him vinegar.

And saying, If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself.

(*The organ changes here to Selection II of the Passion Music and continues to play it softly during the whole of the Pilate scene*)

And it was about the sixth hour and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

And the sun was darkened and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He gave up the ghost.

Now when the Centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly, this was a righteous man.

And all the people that came together to that sight beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned.

And all His acquaintance, and the women that followed Him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

#### THE CURTAIN PARTS

#### THE AUDIENCE CHAMBER OF PONTIUS PILATE

*A screen draped with gorgeous hangings forms the background for the chair where PILATE sits, a little to the left. A rug may be placed before the chair. PILATE enters heavily brooding, preferably from a door at the side of and below the platform, followed by Two ROMAN SOLDIERS. He ascends the steps and seats himself. The SOLDIERS take their stand on either side at the foot of the steps.*

READER. And now when even was come, because it was the preparation, that is the day before the Sabbath, there came Joseph of Arimathæa, a councillor of honorable estate, who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God. And he went in boldly unto Pilate.

Joseph enters; the soldiers cross their spears to prevent his approach; he boldly brushes the spears aside and passes swiftly up the steps to Pilate.

JOSEPH. Sir, give me, I pray thee, the body of Jesus Christ which thou hast crucified.

PILATE. Is He already dead?

Pilate looks up in amazement.

JOSEPH. Yea.

PILATE. (*To the SOLDIERS*) Bring unto me the Centurion.

One soldier departs and returns with the Centurion.

PILATE. Hath Jesus been anywhere dead?

Pilate shows signs of agitation.

CENTURION. Yea, my Lord, at the ninth hour, He cried with a loud voice, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit, and having thus said He gave up the ghost.

The Centurion bows to Pilate

PILATE. Let the body of Jesus be given to this Joseph of Arimathæa.

CENTURION. (*To Joseph*) Truly this man was the son of God.

As they are leaving, he pauses on the left and speaks to Joseph. They depart.

SOLDIER. Sir, the Chief Priests and Pharisees are without.

Stepping forward and saluting.

PILATE. Admit them.

The soldier returns to the door and admits two priests and three Pharisees.

PRIEST. Sir, we remember that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I rise again.

Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and the last error be worst than the first.

PILATE. Ye have a guard, go your way, make it as sure as ye can.

They depart, bowing.

### CURTAIN

(*The organ plays Selection III of the Passion Music during the changing of the scene. As the reading begins the music softly continues.*)

## THE GUARD AT THE SEPULCHRE

*The sepulchre is seen, in the center back, covered with sprays of pine and hemlock or trailing vines with Easter flowers at the sides of the entrance if desired. The door of the sepulchre is made of a tightly drawn strip of dark gray cloth. A box covered with the same gray cloth forms a rough seat on the right of the entrance to the sepulchre.*

READER. Joseph came, therefore, and took down the body of Jesus.

And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and he brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes.

And they brought fine linen and wrapped Him in the linen with the spices.

Now in the place where Jesus was crucified there was a garden and in the garden a new sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock wherein never man before was laid. There laid they Jesus. And they rolled a great stone unto the door of the sepulchre and departed.

And the day was the preparation and the Sabbath drew on.

And Mary Magdalene was there and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

Then came the chief priests.

And they sealed the stone.

And they set a watch.

Then they departed.

(*The choir sings the first and third verses of "Near the Tomb Where Jesus Slept."—Easter Carols, Book I.*)

The two women are seated on the right of the sepulchre.

As the priests approach, the women hastily depart.

The priests set their seal on the sides of the sepulchre.

The priests motion to two soldiers who have entered on the right. The soldiers take their

*(During the singing of the first verse one soldier paces slowly back and forth while the other stands by the side of the tomb. They change during the second verse.)*

READER. Now, late on the Sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb. His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow, and for fear of him the watchers did shake and became as dead men.

## CURTAIN

*(The choir sings "Alleluia, the Strife is O'er."—Easter Carols, Book III. The melody is continued softly throughout the scene.)*

## THE WOMEN AT THE SEPULCHRE

*(There is more light in this scene. Lilies should be banked on either side of the sepulchre.)*

READER. And when the Sabbath was passed Mary Magdalene and Mary the Mother of James, and Salome brought sweet spices that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning on the first day of the week they came to the tomb at the rising of the sun. And they were saying among themselves :

MARY MAGDALENE. Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

SALOME. Behold! the stone is rolled back, and it is exceeding great!

stand on either side of the sepulchre.

The priests depart.

At the word "tomb" the door of the sepulchre suddenly falls away; a strong light shines full on the angel standing in the entrance.

Swiftly the angel steps outside the tomb, standing with arm upraised.

The guards stagger back and fall, face down, upon the ground.

Mary Magdalene followed by the other two women enter, if possible, from a door on the right and below the pulpit platform, and, passing to the front aisle of the church, slowly ascend the steps to the platform. Mary Magdalene turns on the steps as she speaks to the other two.

Mary Magdalene enters the sepulchre while the other two women stand by the entrance gazing in.

Mary Magdalene reappears in the doorway as she speaks, then swiftly passes out from the sepulchre between the two women and hurriedly leaves the platform.

The other two women now move toward the right, turning again toward the sepulchre in amazement and distress.

The sepulchre is suddenly flooded with light. Two angels step out from the sepulchre and stand on either side of the entrance. The women step back gazing at the angels in awe.

The angel speaks with hand upraised.

MARY MAGDALENE. The body of the Lord Jesus is not here! I will run and bring his disciples word.

READER. And it came to pass, while the women were perplexed thereby,

Behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. And as they were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth they said unto them,

ANGEL. Fear not, for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, for He is risen, even as He said. Come see the place where the Lord lay. Remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and the third day rise again.

THE OTHER MARY. I remember his words!

SECOND ANGEL. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and behold He goeth before you into Galilee. There shall ye see Him. Lo, I have told you.

The women depart in wonder and joy. The angels softly step inside the sepulchre and disappear within as the light fades, leaving the tomb dark.

READER. And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy.

(*The choir sings the first verse of "Come, See the Place Where Jesus Lay."*—Easter Carols, Book II.)

## THE DISCIPLES AT THE SEPULCHRE

READER. Now in the meantime Mary Magdalene runneth and cometh to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved and said unto them:

MARY MAGDALENE. They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him.

Peter and John enter either from a door on the left side of the front of the church or they can pass up the left aisle from the back of the church. Mary enters from a door on the right. She hurries toward them, crossing the center aisle and reaching them on the left in front of the pulpit platform.

READER. Peter therefore went forth and the other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. And they ran both together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came first to the sepulchre and, stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen clothes lying, yet entered he not in.

John hurries past Peter, and ascending the steps to the platform, stands looking into the sepulchre.

Peter reaches the sepulchre and enters.

Mary Magdalene ascends the steps slowly behind the disciples with bowed head and stands at the left of the sepulchre.

Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and entered into the tomb, and he beholdeth the linen clothes lying, and the napkin that was about His head not lying with the linen clothes but wrapped together in a place by itself.

Then entered in therefore the other disciple also which came first to the sepulchre and he saw and believed.

JOHN. He is risen!

The disciples stand in the door of the sepulchre as John speaks. Then they depart.

READER. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

Mary Magdalene moves to the right of the sepulchre and stands close by the entrance with head bowed. Her face is covered with her hands, as the choir sings the following hymn.

As Mary looks into the sepulchre it is suddenly flooded with light. The two angels are seen seated within at either end of the white bier.

Mary turns, looking beyond the scene toward the right.  
The light in the sepulchre fades and vanishes.

The voice is heard coming from the right where Mary is gazing.

Mary takes a step toward the right with hands outstretched in supplication; then turns looking out over the congregation with hands clasped in grief.

READER. But Mary was standing without at the sepulchre, weeping.

(*The choir sings the first and third verses of "Through the Long Hidden Years."*—Easter Carols, Book III.)

READER. So as she wept she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre. And she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

And they say unto her:

ANGEL. Woman, why weepest thou?

MARY MAGDALENE. Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him.

READER. When she had thus said she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

VOICE. Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?

READER. She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him:

MARY MAGDALENE. Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him and I will take Him away.

VOICE. Mary!

MARY MAGDALENE. Rabboni! Master!

CURTAIN

*The organ plays the Passion Music, Selection I, while the congregation sits in silence, then the minister may rise and lead the congregation in the Lord's Prayer.*

*The lights in the church are turned on and the congregation can close the Service by singing an Easter hymn.*

A strong light suddenly shines out from whence the voice is heard. Mary turns quickly in sudden wonder. She takes several swift steps and sinks upon one knee with hands outstretched toward the light.



PART II  
FELLOWSHIP PLAYS AND PAGEANTS

THE SEEKER

LAROLA

THE FRIEND OF ALL MEN



## THE SEEKER \*

By

CLARICE VALLETTE McCAULEY

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## CHARACTERS

### PRINCIPALS (12)

RELIGION	SIDDARTHA
MOTHERHOOD	CHANNA
THE SEEKER	CHINA
LILA SARI	MARY (a child)
RANGI	JOHN (her father)
TANAH MALAYU	CHRISTIANITY

## CHARACTERS

(According to episodes)

### PROLOGUE

RELIGION	Principals
MOTHERHOOD	
THE SEEKER	
FIRST MAN	Members of the Chorus
SECOND MAN	
THIRD MAN	
FIRST WOMAN	
SECOND WOMAN	
THIRD WOMAN	

### ANIMISM

(First Episode)

RELIGION	Principals
MOTHERHOOD	
THE SEEKER	
LILA SARI	
RANGI	
TANAH MALAYU	

FIRST NATIVE  
 SECOND NATIVE  
 A MOTHER  
 NATIVE WOMAN } Speaking Parts

VADIAN PRIESTESS—Pantomine

BRAHMANISM

(Second Episode)

RELIGION      }      Principals      { THE SEEKER  
 MOTHERHOOD }

{ TANAH MALAYU

SOLDIER  
 MERCHANT  
 PRIEST      } PILGRIMS (Speaking Parts)  
 LABORER (the SUDRA)

FIRST HINDU WOMAN (Priest's Wife).....Pantomime  
 SECOND HINDU WOMAN (Merchant's Wife).....Speaking Part  
 THIRD HINDU WOMAN (A Friend) ..... Speaking Part  
 INDIA (A Child Bride) ..... Speaking Part  
 FOUR BRAHMAN PRIESTS (Mute)  
 TWO HOLY MEN (Mute)  
 A VOICE (off stage).....This can be one of the Chorus men

BUDDHISM

(Third Episode)

RELIGION      }      Principals      { SIDDARTHA  
 MOTHERHOOD }

{ CHANNA  
 CHINA

TANAH MALAYU  
 A RUNNER ..... Speaking Part  
 AN OLD MAN ..... Mute  
 A SICK MAN ..... Mute  
 A MENDICANT ..... Mute  
 TWO LITTER BEARERS ..... Mute  
 A WIDOW ..... Speaking Part  
 TWO FRIENDS ..... Mute  
 EIGHT GIRLS for "Eight-fold Path" Chorus.. Pantomine and Solos

PRINCESS YASODHARA .....	Mute
FOUR BUDDHIST PRIESTS .....	Mute
FIRST WOMAN—Chorus .....	Speaking Part
SECOND WOMAN—Chorus .....	Speaking Part
JAPAN .....	Mute
BURMAH .....	Mute

## OTHER ALTARS

## (Fourth Episode)

RELIGION	} Principals
MOTHERHOOD	
THE SEEKER	
TANAH MALAYU	
CHINA	
MUEZZIN .....	Speaking Part
ARAB CHIEF .....	Mute
A MOHAMMEDAN .....	Speaking Part
A WOMAN .....	Chorus
BRAHMAN PRIEST .....	From Second Episode

## FINALE

## (Christianity)

RELIGION	} Principals
MOTHERHOOD	
THE SEEKER	
TANAH MALAYU	
MARY .	
JOHN	
CHRISTIANITY	
INDIA	
ALL PARTICIPANTS and	
FULL CHORUS	

## THE SEEKER

### PROLOGUE

*From between the curtains of the main stage steps the symbolic figure of RELIGION. As she represents no especial faith or creed her costume is not marked by any emblem; but there should be an attempt to convey an ecclesiastical reverence and dignity by her simple draperies of royal purple and deep blue—with perhaps a hint of crimson. The lines may be spoken to the music to which they are afterwards sung—if so desired.*

#### RELIGION :

I am that need that dwells in every heart,  
That longing of the child to know his Father's face;  
I am that seed that's sown in every land,  
That universal hunger of the human race.  
For on that first dim day that saw the dawn,  
I heard the Voice that said, "Let there be light!"  
I felt the Spirit moving on the waters,  
Saw the first stars He set to rule the night.

And up from that chaos of the world's begetting,  
Out from that Eden that was lost to man,  
Hearing his cries of impotence and longing,  
I've walked beside him since the world began.  
I am the germ of Truth for which men seek;  
The Divine Idea for which they gladly die;  
I am Religion, and whoso gropes for me  
Will hear God's voice in answer to his cry.

God of the pagan, God of the Brahman,  
God of the sorrowing children of the race;  
God of the Buddhist, God of the Moslem,

Each have I been—in each have found some grace  
For each adds its chord to that great Hymn of Faith  
And ye who would anew the Christ-Child find,  
Follow where I lead—in tolerance and love,  
For many are the paths that wind and wind;

Many are the paths—and devious the ways—  
But each draws us nearer to God's throne of Grace;  
For I am that need that dwells in every heart—  
The universal hunger of the human race.

(On the last line, with a gesture that invites the audience to follow her, RELIGION slips out between the curtains—which are held slightly apart for her—and takes her place on the steps of the inner stage.)

(To the first chords of "We are the Weary Ones and Heavy-laden," the curtains part slowly, disclosing the "Heavy-laden Ones" of the world, standing in dejected groups about a rude altar. Right and left of it kneel two women who are winding vines about its base. In front of it and facing it kneels a man [FIRST MAN]. His forehead rests between his hands upon the earth.)

NOTE.—The lines of the first chorus are spoken before they are sung. They should come from individual members of the different chorus groups, and the verse should run as smoothly as though spoken by one person.)

FIRST WOMAN:

We are the weary ones and heavy laden,

SECOND WOMAN:

Oppressed with weight of many grievous woes;

THIRD WOMAN:

In endless march upon the world's sad breast—

FOURTH WOMAN:

One of us comes—

FIFTH WOMAN:

—while yet another goes.

SIXTH WOMAN:

And we are hungry—

SEVENTH WOMAN:

—and bread alone does not suffice us;

EIGHTH WOMAN:

And we are thirsty—

NINTH WOMAN:

—and there's none to give us drink:

TENTH WOMAN:

No one with outstretched arms to ease our burdens—

TOGETHER:

No one to help when under them we sink.

(*As the last line is spoken, those nearest the altar kneel, with uplifted hands; and while the chorus is sung those on the outer circle move just sufficiently to keep the picture changing rhythmically.*)

CHORUS:

We are the weary ones and heavy-laden,

Oppressed with weight of many grievous woes;

In endless march upon the world's sad breast,

One of us comes—while yet another goes;

And we are hungry—and bread alone does not suffice us;

And we are thirsty—and there's none to give us drink:

No one with outstretched arms to ease our burdens;

No one to help when under them we sink.

(*At the last two lines, all kneel, with arms stretched out to the altar*)

RELIGION (*Looking down upon them pityingly*) What is it that ye build, all ye that suffer?

FIRST MAN (*Rising, his arms extended imploringly toward RELIGION*) We build an altar to the UNKNOWN GOD!

(*There is a crashing chord—a few bars from the opening chorus, and the people rise, forming four new groups, as they murmur among themselves*)

SEVERAL VOICES FROM FIRST GROUP: We've built the altar—

OTHER VOICES (*Replying*) —what more can we do?

SEVERAL VOICES FROM SECOND GROUP: The Unknown God!

OTHER VOICES (*Replying*) —think you he's on his way?

THIRD GROUP: We must have something here that we may worship—

ONE VOICE FROM FOURTH GROUP: We need a God—

TOGETHER: —that we to him may pray.

(*Very softly from the orchestra comes the melody that accompanies the SPIRIT OF MOTHERHOOD—a tender little lullaby. RELIGION, leaving her place on the steps, sits at L of inner stage. The people with lifted heads listen, a new look of hope upon their faces*)

SECOND MAN (*Nearest inner stage—in a voice of wonder*) Way!  
. . . make way for the Blind!

FIRST MAN (*Going up to him eagerly*) The Blind?

THIRD MAN: Make way for the Blind, he said.

(*Between the curtains of the inner stage comes the SPIRIT OF MOTHERHOOD, scarcely aware of those about her, so completely is her attention given to THE SEEKER, whom she is leading by the hand—drawing him rather after her—watching his footsteps with tender care. THE SEEKER'S face is very pale and wistful, and he holds his head at that pathetic, listening attitude of the blind. He carries a staff, with*)

*which he is feeling his way. The men immediately gather round him at the R, while the women draw MOTHERHOOD down with them to the L to the music of the lullaby)*

FIRST WOMAN (*At left of MOTHERHOOD*) How did you come across him? . . . It's so terrible to be blind.

SECOND WOMAN (*At left of FIRST WOMAN*) You say that as if you knew, poor soul.

FIRST WOMAN (*Looking out straight before her*) I had a brother once—was blind. . . . Where did you find him?

MOTHERHOOD: He was feeling his way along the road . . . stumbling over the rocks . . . getting torn by the briars . . . wet in the bog . . . with no one to hold out a helping hand. I think I never saw so sorry a sight. He says (*Very tenderly*) he has no mother.

FIRST WOMAN: Where do you suppose he was trying to go?

MOTHERHOOD: I am not sure. . . . Upon a quest, he says.

THIRD WOMAN (*Who is at R of MOTHERHOOD*) But why does he go alone?

MOTHERHOOD: Upon the quest he goes—I think each soul must go alone.

(*THE SEEKER, who has been talking with the men at R, starts suddenly—distress in his gesture*)

THE SEEKER: Where did she go? I do not feel her presence.

FIRST MAN (*At L of SEEKER*) She's talking with the women. . . . Tell us more of this quest. . . . Why do you go?

THE SEEKER: I heard your cries. . . . I felt the universal need. The altar that you've built is empty. There is a hunger in your heart that nothing but the truth will satisfy. Therefore I seek Him, my brethren.

FIRST MAN: But how will you know Him—when you are blind?

SECOND MAN (*At R of SEEKER*) Shall we not go with you?

THE SEEKER: The world will always follow the seeker after Truth.

Ye say that I am blind? . . . ALL THE WORLD IS BLIND! All down the ages I seem to see a procession of strange gods—with their disciples stumbling after them. They follow a light within themselves. . . . (*He stops—as though he sees something that he cannot express in words*)

THIRD WOMAN (*Suddenly leaving the other women and joining the group about THE SEEKER*) Tell us . . . tell us of these strange gods. Perhaps some one of them may do to place upon the altar of our hearts.

SEVERAL WOMEN: Yes. . . . Tell us what it is these gods would have of us.

SECOND MAN: First, tell us what it is you seek.

ALL: Yes, tell us . . . tell us.

THE SEEKER: Let the woman speak. She has a more eloquent tongue than I—and, besides, it is through her eyes that I would see.

SECOND MAN: You let the woman judge?

THE SEEKER (*Wistfully*) She sees something that I do not; I let her vision guide me.

SECOND MAN (*Puzzled*) Why?

THE SEEKER: It is through her—and through the children—that the race must rise. (*Taking a step towards center*) Where are you, gentle SPIRIT OF MOTHERHOOD? Give me your hand.

MOTHERHOOD (*Coming to his side and taking his outstretched hand*) I am standing at last where Woman has always longed to be—side by side with Man. What would you have of me?

THE SEEKER: Tell them what it is ye'd have me seek and find.

MOTHERHOOD: Shall I speak for myself alone—or for all these, my sisters?

THE WOMEN: Oh, speak for us!

FIRST WOMAN: Yes, speak for us—for we are dumb!

MOTHERHOOD (*Taking a step forward, so that she stands alone at the side of the altar, she speaks to the melody of the lullaby, grown now a little louder and more urgent*)

All down the ages,  
Mother hearts are yearning;  
For a faith for Little Ones  
Anxious eyes are turning.

Little heads that cuddle,  
Little hands that cling,  
These the judges you must face  
With the gods you bring.

We, who bear your children,  
In glorifying pain—  
Must we not be satisfied,  
Ere the race can gain?

Show us a God who is tender—  
One who himself was a Son  
Who pitied and loved little children,  
And your quest is already done.

Then on the empty altar,  
We will light the sacred fires;  
For Man is the Seeker ever,  
But always the Woman inspires.

(As she finishes, from behind the curtain, a soprano voice sings the first stanza of THE PROLOGUE)

## INTERLUDE—SOPRANO SOLO AND CHORUS

**SOPRANO:**

I am that need that dwells in every heart,  
That longing of the child to see his Father's face;  
I am that seed that's sown in every land,  
That universal hunger of the human race;  
For on that first dim day that saw the dawn,  
I heard the Voice that said, "Let there be light!"  
I felt the Spirit moving on the waters,  
Saw the first stars He set to rule the night.

**CHORUS:**

We are the weary ones and heavy-laden,  
Oppressed with weight of many grievous woes;  
In endless march upon the world's sad breast,  
One of us comes—while yet another goes;  
And we are hungry—and bread alone does not suffice us;  
And we are thirsty—and there's none to give us drink;  
No one with outstretched arms to ease our burdens,  
No one to help when under them we sink.

*(Action: While this chorus is being sung, those needed for small parts in the first and second episodes should unobtrusively leave the stage, going to the sides from which they will enter; about one third of the chorus—moving in a rhythmic slow march—should come down and take positions upon the steps; the remainder [about another third of the entire number] by the time the chorus is finished should be grouped R and L of main stage, some sitting, some standing. MOTHERHOOD has placed THE SEEKER upon the marble bench on the R of stage. RELIGION remains at extreme L of steps of inner stage—her head bent as though in thought. As the CHORUS is finished there rises a sighing plaint from all)*

EVERYBODY: THE UNKNOWN GOD. . . . THE UNKNOWN GOD. . . .

(*Note.—This is properly the end of THE PROLOGUE, but the action continues without intermission.*)

## FIRST EPISODE

## ANIMISM

(*In the pause that has followed the cry of "THE UNKNOWN GOD" is heard the singing of a bird. The stage is brilliantly lighted as by a summer sunset*)

## RELIGION:

In the days that marked the world's beginning  
 Man feared a force he could not understand;  
 All that was strange to him in wind or stream,  
 All that brought terror to his childlike heart—  
 The mountain torrent swollen with spring rains,  
 The miracle of growing things, of trees, of flowers—  
 Were proofs to him of power beyond his own.  
 And so he gave them life; the very rocks and stones  
 Endowed with spirits; bowed down and worshiped them;  
 And thus he found a god in everything.

(*The singing of the bird becomes louder; there is a rippling laugh, and LILA SARI—a young Malay girl—darts from between the curtains of the inner stage. She is breathless, full of childish glee in a forbidden escapade; she is the Spirit of Inquisitive Youth. She is followed immediately by RANGI, who looks worried and reproachful*)

RANGI (*As he runs in*) Fadi! . . . Fadi! . . . You know the place is Fadi!

LILA SARI (*With a saucy toss of her head*) I care not!

RANGI (*Shaking a warning finger at her*) You'll be bewitched some time—and it will serve you right. Why will you go so near, when you know it's fadi?

LILA SARI: I don't see why it *should* be forbidden. It is the most beautiful grove in all the woods . . . but that's the way! Does it not seem strange to you that the *nicest things* are always forbidden?

RANGI: Why should it seem strange? It has always been so. . . . But you're always so daring, Lila Sari. You'll see! You will offend some spirit with your talk. Then you'll get sick—and die.

LILA SARI (*Catching his mood, she looks about half fearfully*) I went not in the sacred grove; I did but look.

RANGI: I saw you, Lila Sari.

LILA SARI: Well, . . . I did but set my toe upon the furtherest root. . . . (*In a whisper*) Do you think Aoa saw me?

RANGI (*Impressively*) The Great Spirit of the Banyan Tree sees and knows all things.

LILA SARI: Oh! . . . Oh, I am cold.

RANGI (*Suddenly spying a twig in his way*) See! . . . Fetish! . . . Fetish! . . .

LILA SARI: What have you found, O Rangi?

RANGI: A twig of Banyan where there grows no tree. How came it here? See! It is fetish. (*He kneels before it with his forehead on the ground*)

LILA SARI (*Seizing it with a mischievous, daring laugh*) Good! Now we can have a fire.

RANGI (*Horrified*) But it's sacred, Lila Sari. . . . I found it where no Banyan grows.

LILA SARI (*Pettishly*) But it makes the very brightest fire of them all. There's nothing else about, and I am cold.

(*From now on the stage grows slowly darker as from a swiftly gathering storm*)

RANGI: I am afraid. . . . You will offend Manike, the Great Spirit of the Fire.

LILA SARI (*As one who loves an argument*) I don't see why. Mani was only a mortal like ourselves—and he forced the Great Manike to give up the secret of fire—did n't he?

RANGI: Yes, and he set all the underworld in flames—as well you know. Oh, see! Why, here is fiber from the coconut—

LILA SARI: Give it to me! . . . (*He holds her away from it*) Oh, build me a fire!

RANGI: Do not touch it, Lila Sari! . . . How came it there? It is fetish.

LILA SARI (*Sobbing and kneeling beside it*) Oh, I am cold. . . .

RANGI (*After watching her for a moment in hesitation*) Do not weep, Lila Sari. . . . I will build you a fire. (*He breaks the twig in half, and, giving one half to LILA SARI, plies the other against the end she holds. At the same time he chants The Fire-God's Song:*\*)

Grant, oh, grant me thy hidden fire,  
Thou banyan tree!

Utter a prayer to the Spirit of  
The banyan tree!

Kindle a fire for Manike of the dust  
Of the banyan tree.

(*As nothing happens, RANGI begins to look terrified; LILA SARI is afraid to meet his eye. The stage grows darker and darker; and there are distant rumblings of thunder*)

LILA SARI (*Faintly*) Try it again, O Rangi.

\* This is, I believe, a literal translation of the incantation used among certain Malay tribes when producing fire in the primitive way.

RANGI (*Attempting the incantation again in a voice that trembles*)

Grant, oh, grant me thy hidden fire,  
Thou banyan tree!

(*There is a flash of lightning, a crash of thunder, and LILA SARI with a cry of terror throws herself face downwards on the ground*)

The gods are angry! . . . The whole place is accursed!

(*RANGI rushes off upper right, and his voice is heard in the distance*) Fadi . . . fadi . . .

LILA SARI (*Rising unsteadily and looking about in terror*) Oh, I am cold! Great Spirit of the Banyan Tree, I meant no harm.

(*She goes off lower L. Then her voice too is heard in the distance*)

Rangi. . . . Where are you? . . . Rangi!

MOTHERHOOD (*After a pause*) She meant no harm. . . . The child was only curious—no great sin.

THE SEEKER (*With a certain dry severity*) She should not have meddled with what she did not understand.

MOTHERHOOD: She sought to understand. . . . It is cruel that she should be punished for that.

RELIGION: The world is ever cruel to those who look beyond the established order of things. How seems this Spirit worship?

MOTHERHOOD: It's but a fairy tale for the children of the race.

RELIGION: Wait! . . .

(*She raises her hand, and the curtains of the inner stage part slowly showing two Malay natives huddled in attitudes of deep dejection in front of a "fetish-post." A lurid red light as though thrown from a fire illuminates the inner stage. A little apart from the men sits a NATIVE WOMAN. THE MOTHER enters, carrying her baby, which she holds out towards the Fetish, as though entreating help*)

## FIRST INNER STAGE SCENE

THE MOTHER: Sick . . . sick . . . sick.

NATIVE WOMAN: He is not fat and strong.

THE MOTHER (*Shaking her head sadly*) He does not grow.

NATIVE WOMAN: Perhaps he was born on a day that was fadi?

(*She looks at THE MOTHER sharply. This one shows by her actions that such was the case. She crouches over the infant protectingly*) Don't be afraid. . . . I will not tell. . . .

THE MOTHER: I hid him for three days. . . . he was so sick. . . .

(*With a sob*) . . . Too weak to cry. . . . They would make me kill him if they knew.

NATIVE WOMAN: You must sacrifice some part of him to the Great Spirits . . . a finger . . . or a toe. Then the Great Spirits are no more offended.

(*THE MOTHER goes out, her head bent protectingly over the child . . . the NATIVE WOMAN going with her and appearing to comfort her*)

MOTHERHOOD: A day that is fadi . . . what do they mean by that?

RELIGION: This is a religion of things forbidden; it is even forbidden to be born on certain days.

MOTHERHOOD: But surely she will not *do* this terrible thing. . . . She is a mother.

RELIGION: She will do even as she was brought up to do; we are born to an inherited belief; few of us achieve a different one.

(*There is heard the strange primitive music of the VADIAN PRIESTESS, its beat accentuated by tom-toms and the rattling of gourds. Across the back of the main stage RANGI is now moving. He carries a small bowl which he deposits by the altar; then steps back against the curtains R, where he stands with folded arms and bowed head*)

FIRST NATIVE (*Looking out from inner stage—at RANGI*) What is the matter with Rangi?

SECOND NATIVE: Lila Sari lies sick in the woods.

FIRST NATIVE: Why is he not with her?

SECOND NATIVE: He does not dare; the place is fadi.

FIRST NATIVE: She will die.

SECOND NATIVE: Perhaps not. . . . Who can tell?

FIRST NATIVE: Does any one know the sin—why—Lila—Sari—was ill?

MOTHERHOOD: Why does he think Lila Sari must have sinned?

RELIGION: Any illness is a punishment for offending some Great Spirit; therefore no one dare risk further offense by taking care of the sick.

(*From the other side of the main stage comes a VADIAN PRIESTESS. She wears the full regalia for special conjurations*)

FIRST NATIVE: Rangi has paid the Priestess to intercede with the Great Spirits.

(*The music now grows louder. Silhouetted against the lurid light from the inner stage, the VADIAN PRIESTESS comes behind the altar. RANGI kneels and reaches out his hands towards her—imploringly. At first she shakes her head—but as he repeats his gesture, she begins to move about the altar, at first slowly, then more and more rapidly—alternating between entreaty to the heavens and bowing low before the altar. Suddenly the light goes out on the inner stage, and in the darkness the VADIAN PRIESTESS vanishes. The music stops—and there is a low rumbling of thunder. RANGI disappears*)

FIRST NATIVE: The Great Spirits will not listen.

SECOND NATIVE (*Nodding his head*) Lila Sari will die.

(*The curtains of inner stage close; the front stage is now slowly lighted*)

MOTHERHOOD: Poor Lila Sari! . . . I do not like this faith. It's built on fear—a child's fear of the dark. I would not teach my children fear. And see—(*She looks down to where those of the chorus on the steps have fallen asleep. A faint rosy light—as of dawn—begins to spread across the stage*) See! There's nothing in a faith like this for them—poor, weary ones.

THE SEEKER: Shall we go on?

MOTHERHOOD: We must. The quest has but begun.

(*She turns as though to go, but stops suddenly as TANAH MALAYU steps from between the curtains. At MOTHERHOOD's cry of alarm THE SEEKER gropes for her hand*)

THE SEEKER: What is it? What do you see?

MOTHERHOOD: A strange barbaric one. . . . Who are you?

TANAH MALAYU:

I am Tanah Malayu,  
Isles of the Shallow Seas—  
I am that which my name signifies—The Wanderer.  
What have ye to offer to my people,  
All ye who do not like the ancient Spirit-worship of our race?  
We would seek Truth—the Truth that satisfies.  
Tell us from what land the Truth shall come—  
And we to welcome it will gladly run.

(*On the last line he steps down to the bench L*)

(NOTE.—This is properly the end of the First Episode, but the action continues without intermission)

#### INTERLUDE—SUNG BY THE CHORUS

CHORUS:

Up from the chaos of the world's begetting,  
Out from that Eden that was lost to Man;

Hearing his cries of impotence and longing,  
 I've walked beside him since the world began.  
 I am the germ of Truth for which Men seek ;  
 The Divine Idea for which they gladly die ;  
 I am Religion, and whoso gropes for me,  
 Will hear at last God's voice in answer to his cry.

## SECOND EPISODE

## BRAHMANISM

## SECOND INNER STAGE SCENE

*The curtains of the inner stage are drawn apart; the light is blue. Across the stage pass a band of pilgrims, each one speaking as he enters. They represent the four castes of the Hindu.*

THE SOLDIER :

Aloof and distant through the Himalayan snows,

THE MERCHANT :

Far down to where the fertile Ganges flows—

THE BRAHMAN :

A band of pilgrims drag their weary way—

THE SUDRA :

Nor pause—nor rest—excepting when they pray.

*(At the last line all four prostrate themselves in the attitude of prayer)*

MALAYU : Who is it that they worship ?

A VOICE (*From behind the curtain*) 'Tis the Great God Brahm ! \*  
*(The pilgrims, rising one at a time, take up the story)*

THE SOLDIER :

And then from the shoulders of the Great God Brahm,  
 Arrogant—important—the Soldier sprang ;

\* Pronounced *Br-r-um*, as though rimed with *Dr-r-um*.

THE MERCHANT:

And from his thighs, the Merchant—may his shadow never pass  
Upon the Brahman of a higher caste;

THE BRAHMAN:

For he, the Priest, from out Brahm's head did come—  
Brahm, the all-knowing, all-enveloping One.;

THE SUDRA:

As for the laborer, the Sudra—he  
From out Brahm's feet, and lowlier than the other three.

MALAYU: But who is this Brahm?

A VOICE (*From behind the curtain—with great dignity and force*)  
“I am the Creature sealed deep in every Creature's heart.”

MOTHERHOOD: “The creature sealed deep in every creature's heart—”  
Oh, tell us more—O Great God Brahm.

CHORUS:

“The policy of conquerors, the potency of kings,  
The great unbroken silence in learning's secret things;  
The love of all the learned—the seed of all which springs—  
Living or lifeless—still or stirred—whatever beings be,  
None of them in all the worlds, but it exists by Me.”

(*While this chorus is being sung the curtains of inner stage close, leaving the BRAHMAN PRIEST at center on steps*)

THE SEEKER (*Thoughtfully*) From many gods to one—it seems the better way.

MOTHERHOOD (*Addressing the BRAHMAN PRIEST*) And do you still worship this one God alone?

THE BRAHMAN (*Stepping down to the altar*)

“In these three persons the one God was shown—  
Each first in place, each last, not one alone;  
Of Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, each may be,  
First, Second, Third, among the Blessed Three.” \*

\* From Kalidasa, the greatest of all Indian poets.

MOTHERHOOD: From one to three—it seems I grow confused. And may one choose?

### THIRD INNER STAGE SCENE

THE BRAHMAN: Listen to the story of the Sage's Search. (*He steps to one side. The curtains of the inner stage part softly, showing the MERCHANT sitting cross-legged before a table, reading aloud from a large book*)

THE MERCHANT (*Reading*) "A dispute having arisen among the sages as to which of the three gods was the greatest, Brighu set out to determine the point. On approaching Brahma, he purposely omitted an obeisance; the god's anger blazed most terribly forth, though he suffered himself at last to be appeased. When, however, he repaired to the abode of Siva, and omitted to return the god's salutation, Siva raised his trident to destroy him, and he was only saved from death by the intervention of Siva's wife. Entering the heaven of Vishnu, he found that gentle god asleep—and boldly kicked the god to awaken him. Instead of showing anger, however, Vishnu asked his pardon for not having greeted him on his arrival, and inquired tenderly whether he had hurt his foot.

"'This,' said Brighu, 'is the mightiest god; he overpowers by the most potent of all weapons—gentleness and generosity.'"  
(*As he finishes reading, the MERCHANT'S WIFE—the SECOND HINDU WOMAN—enters the room. Instantly the MERCHANT closes the book*)

MOTHERHOOD:

The gentle Vishnu shows us—if we would—  
That evil may be overcome with good.  
But why did he close the Holy Book?

THE BRAHMAN: Her ear is not pure enough to hear the sacred word;  
nor is the ear of any woman.

MOTHERHOOD: But surely she may read it for herself?

THE BRAHMAN: She may not read the Sacred Books, nor offer a prayer or sacrifice—excepting as her husband directs.

(MOTHERHOOD starts to make a proud gesture of dismissal; but THE SEEKER raising his blind face to hers says gently) What difference does it make—since that they two are one?

MALAYU: Let us try this faith, that rolls in on us from the north.

(MALAYU sits on the bench L)

(Enter from L side of main stage FOUR BRAHMAN PRIESTS, bearing an image of Ganesha; they are followed by the four PILGRIMS, and move about the altar in solemn processional, while the chorus sing. The PILGRIMS are followed—at a distance—by the Brahman's wife—FIRST HINDU WOMAN—who remains at lower L, waiting. NOTE.—Where there is ample stage space and you have many participants from which to draw, this would be a good place to elaborate the pageantry)

CHORUS:

“Single is every living creature born,  
 Single he passes to another world;  
 Single he eats the fruit of evil deeds,  
 Single the fruit of good; and when he leaves  
 His body like a log or heap of clay  
 Upon the ground, his kinsmen walk away;  
 Virtue alone stays by him at the tomb  
 And bears him through the dreary, trackless gloom.” \*

THE SEEKER (*Thoughtfully*)

“Virtue alone stays by him at the tomb  
 And bears him through the dreary, trackless gloom.”

(As they conclude their rites, the FOUR BRAHMAN PRIESTS and four PILGRIMS go off the stage—in the same solemn processional as they entered. The Brahman's wife—FIRST HINDU WOMAN—has now come

\* From the *Precepts of Manu*.

*timidly before the altar and sits facing the idol—with her back to the audience—in the attitude of Hindu meditation. The SECOND and THIRD HINDU WOMEN come from between the curtains of the inner stage, their water pitchers on their shoulders, and stand watching her. The music continues—playing very softly the chorus last sung)*

SECOND HINDU WOMAN: Poor woman! . . . She is here again. She has done this for days.

THIRD HINDU WOMAN: But why does she evermore entreat the God Ganesha?

SECOND HINDU WOMAN: Perhaps her husband is sick . . . and she is afraid he will die.

THIRD HINDU WOMAN: But he does not love her. . . . He is no longer good to her since she bore him a woman-child. When a stranger asks him—"How many children have you?" he answers "One—" (Sadly) . . . He does not count the girl.

SECOND HINDU WOMAN: Nevertheless, if he dies, they will say it is her fault . . . that it is for some evil she has done in a former existence that she is being punished.

THIRD HINDU WOMAN: I know, . . . and they will take away her jewels and dresses—and she will have barely enough food to keep her alive—and all the hardest work of the household to do. . . . Poor woman! . . . Come, let us go. My husband waits at home.

*(As they leave by the upper R, the FIRST HINDU WOMAN rises, brings her palms together in front of her, and her forehead down till it touches the tips of her fingers, stands in this position for a moment, and then glides noiselessly away between the curtains of the inner stage. NOTE.—This and the pantomime which follows are much helped by the continued playing of the music of the last chorus)*

*(The curtains of the inner stage now separate and show the BRAHMAN PRIEST sitting at his evening meal. The FIRST HINDU WOMAN waits upon him; she pantomimes that she is hungry—he takes out a few dates and pushes them toward her. Then he rises, takes his staff and prepares to go. The FIRST HINDU WOMAN, who is watching him anxiously, throws herself at his feet. He repulses her. Then he comes down to the main stage)*

THE BRAHMAN: The years of my life are few; my duty to the world is done. I have married and become the founder of a family. Now my duty is to myself. I must do good deeds. . . . I must accumulate Karma. . . . I go upon a pilgrimage.

*(He strides out L. The curtains of the inner stage close upon the prostrate wife. The main stage begins to grow dark)*

MOTHERHOOD: What is this “Karma”? I do not understand.

RELIGION: It is the heaping up of merit, by doing of good deeds . . . even as we store grain against the coming of the winter.

CHORUS:

“Daily perform thine own appointed task  
Unweariedly; and to obtain a friend  
Collect a store of virtue like the ants,  
Who gather up their treasure into heaps;  
For neither father, mother, wife nor son,  
Nor kinsmen will remain beside thee then;  
When thou art passing to that other home—  
Thy virtue will thy only comrade be.” \*

*(While this Chorus is being sung a band of HOLY MEN pass across the stage from L to R. They are followed by the BRAHMAN PRIEST. All are ragged and dirty; one wears a huge collar about his neck—made to suggest a cumbersome iron frame; another holds his arm straight above his head, etc.)*

\* From the *Precepts of Manu*.

THE SEEKER (*Repeating thoughtfully*)

"When thou art passing to that other home—

Thy virtue will thy only comrade be."

There is something in the sound of that I like.

MOTHERHOOD: And yet it seems too selfish . . . to care for no soul but one's own. I cannot fancy a god who would be pleased by that.

MALAYU: What of the woman's soul? If a pilgrimage is necessary for his salvation, why does he not take her along?

(*The main stage is now quite dark; the curtains of the inner stage part, showing A VERY OLD MAN—who sits in an attitude of meditation. Gradually he seems to relax, and to fall over in a heap—dead*)

BRAHMAN PRIEST (*From behind curtain*) And so, leaving his good deeds to his loved ones, and his evil deeds to his enemies, by force of meditation, he goes to the eternal Brahm.

AN INVISIBLE CHORUS: \* How sweet to be lost in the ocean of the infinite! Nirvana! Nirvana!

RELIGION: He has entered Nirvana.

THE BRAHMAN (*Sonorously, from behind the curtain*) He has become one with Brahm!

FULL CHORUS:

"The policy of conquerors, the potency of kings,  
The great unbroken silence in learning's secret things;  
The love of all the learned—the seed of all which springs—  
Living or lifeless—still or stirred—whatever beings be,  
None of them in all the worlds but it exists by Me."

(*The curtains close softly. A light—as of a ray of moonlight—is thrown on TANAH MALAYU, sitting judgelike on the marble seat. He is shaking his head rather dubiously*)

\* These may be the girls who will presently do the "Eightfold Path."

TANAH MALAYU: And all this—to achieve NOTHINGNESS.

*(There is a long pause. The light now spreads over the entire stage. THE SEEKER is shaking his head)*

THE SEEKER: They are not brothers—they do not help each other—

MOTHERHOOD: And if he fails in the vast sum of his good deeds—to be reborn—

THE SEEKER: To pay in some new incarnation the penalty for the sins of this one—by a life foredoomed to misery before it starts—

RELIGION:

And so, the wheel of suffering and pain—  
Death and rebirth—turns once and once again.

MOTHERHOOD: What of the children—are they happy?

RELIGION: India, come forth!—and answer for yourself.

*(From the curtains of the inner stage comes a small, slight girl—richly dressed as a child-bride. She stands with bent head, a look of unnatural seriousness on her small face)*

MOTHERHOOD: Why, . . . she comes as a little girl!

RELIGION: She comes . . . as a cry from all the little girls of that vast land.

MOTHERHOOD: What is there in this faith for you, O Woman-child of India?

INDIA: For me, there is no separate sacrifice—no need for one. My husband is become my god. I take rank with the lowest of the four great castes. I may not join my husband in prayer, nor wear the sacred thread; I must not read the Vedas, nor hear them read; marriage is my only hope of salvation, therefore I am married in childhood.

*(MOTHERHOOD opens her arms to the child, who goes timidly to her and sits Hindu fashion at THE SEEKER'S feet)*

MOTHERHOOD: These gods of the Brahman sound well to the ear—but they do not seem to bring comfort to the sore-oppressed. Surely your soul, O Girl of India, is worth as much to the God who created it—as is the soul of Man.

(*While the CHORUS sings again, all those on the steps, excepting a few at the extreme ends, come on to the darkened stage, passing each other so that those on the R go L—and those on the L go to the R. The four nearest the altar lift the litter with the idol—and bear it away, going off L upper. In the general movement AN OLD MAN seats himself at the foot of the altar, and A SICK MAN throws himself down upon the steps of the inner stage. In the meantime soft lights graduating from moonlight through dawn to sunrise are thrown upon the singers)*)

#### INTERLUDE

CHORUS:

We are the weary ones and heavy-laden,  
Oppressed with weight of many grievous woes;  
In endless march upon the world's sad breast,  
One of us comes—while yet another goes;  
And we are hungry—and bread alone does not suffice us;  
And we are thirsty—and there's none to give us drink;  
No one with outstretched arms to ease our burdens;  
No one to help when under them we sink.

MALAYU: Once more the altar's empty.

(NOTE.—*This is properly the end of the Second Episode, but the action continues without intermission.*)

#### THIRD EPISODE

##### BUDDHISM

A RUNNER (*Heard first off stage R*) All ye upon the city street attend! . . . The Prince Siddartha walks abroad (*Entering*). By an edict of the King, the great Siddartha must see no sin—

no sickness—no suffering. All ye who are sick or suffering hide yourselves—on pain of instant death (*Going*). The Prince Siddartha walks abroad. . . . (*He exits lower L—and his voice is heard growing fainter in the distance*). The Prince Siddartha walks abroad.

(*There is much movement among the people on the stage, those who will be needed for “bits” in the next Episode taking this opportunity of leaving it; those who remain press in around the entrance upper R, and cry out in tones of joy and expectation*)

ONE GROUP: The Prince Siddartha walks abroad!

ANOTHER GROUP: The Prince Siddartha walks abroad!

WOMEN'S VOICES: Hail to our great Siddartha!

MEN'S VOICES: Noble Gautama!

STILL OTHER VOICES: Son of the Star, Siddartha!

ALL: Siddartha! Siddartha!

(*Walking thoughtfully, without pomp, and followed by CHANNA, SIDDARTHA enters upper R. The people cluster about him—their cries of joyous welcome dying into silence. As he nears the OLD MAN at the foot of the altar, CHANNA steps quickly between him and SIDDARTHA—whose attention is attracted*)

SIDDARTHA: Stand aside, Channa. Who is that man; and what is the matter with him?

CHANNA: He is very old, without support and useless; presently, O Prince, he will die.

SIDDARTHA: Is that something peculiar in his family? Or is it the common lot of all created beings?

CHANNA: Prince, it is the common lot of all creatures. (*He motions to two men of the chorus, who assist the OLD MAN to rise and take him to one side*)

SIDDARTHA: If that is so, then what have I, the future prey of old age, to do with pleasure? (*He turns sadly away and sees the Sick Man*) And this one?

CHANNA: He is ill, O Prince—and suffers.

SIDDARTHA: Then health is but a dream in which I can no longer take any joy.

(*There is the sound of lamentation off L and the THREE WIDOWS enter, striking their breasts and telling their beads. They are followed by two men bearing a covered litter*)

THREE WIDOWS: Rama! . . . Rama! . . . Rama! . . .

(*CHANNA tries to wave them back, but SIDDARTHA steps quickly forward and halts the procession. The litter bearers put down their burden*)

SIDDARTHA (*To the THREE WIDOWS*) Why do you weep? What is the matter?

FIRST WIDOW: Cannot you see that he is dead?

SIDDARTHA: Dead? Then woe to life where a man remains so short a time. (*He waves his hand, the procession continues; the THREE WIDOWS resume their cries of "Rama! Rama! Rama!" They go off lower R*)

If there were no old age, no disease, no death . . .

I must think on how to accomplish deliverance . . .

I must meditate on the four noble truths.

(*He sits at the foot of the altar in the attitude in which Buddha is oftenest depicted. The CHORUS draws back noiselessly*)

MOTHERHOOD: What are the four noble truths?

RELIGION: The Law of Causation which was revealed to Siddartha, after his long meditation beneath the sacred Bo-tree. Listen:

CHORUS (*Singing softly off stage*)

"Suffering and sorrow,

The cause of suffering,

The causation of sorrow,  
The path leading to the cessation of sorrow.”  
NIRVANA! NIRVANA!

(During this chorus a MENDICANT enters from R upper. He is calm, subdued, and utterly dejected in manner. He makes his way among the people—holding out his alms bowl—and pauses before SIDDARTHA)

SIDDARTHA: Channa, who is this man?

CHANNA: He is one who has renounced all pleasures, all desires; he tries to conquer himself; he is a devotee. Without passion, without envy, he walks about asking alms.

(The MENDICANT, moving deliberately—passes off upper L)

SIDDARTHA (Rising) The life of a devotee has always been praised by the wise. It will be my refuge; it shall lead me to happiness and immortality through the “Eightfold Path.”

(CHANNA goes off lower L. Semi-darkness now envelopes the stage. Through the curtains of the inner stage eight girls come—like shadows. They are veiled—and move with the slow, graceful humility of the Eastern woman. The four in the middle bear on a short wooden litter an image of Buddha. This they place upon the empty altar, and, still moving rhythmically to the music of the “Eightfold Path,” they advance and retreat upon the apparently unconscious SIDDARTHA, each one singing as she nears him, and illustrating her lines with appropriate pantomime)

FIRST GIRL:  
I am Right Belief—  
And you must seek me;

SECOND GIRL:  
Right Aims am I—and  
You must invite me;

THIRD GIRL:  
Right Speech upon your lips  
Will place a guard;

**FOURTH GIRL:**

Right Action, then—  
Your way will not retard;

**FIFTH GIRL:**

Right Means of Livelihood  
I'll have you seek;

**SIXTH GIRL:**

And Right Endeavor,  
Humble be and meek;

**SEVENTH GIRL:**

Right Mindfulness—  
Be pure, O Great Gautama!

**EIGHTH GIRL:**

Right Meditation—for the soul—  
Achieves Nirvana!

**CHORUS:**

NIRVANA——NIRVANA!

(*To the same music with which they entered, they go out through the L upper entrance. SIDDARTHA follows them—his hand extended—his head thrown back, as though following a vision*)

**RELIGION:** Now comes the test of Siddartha's great desire to find the perfect way; a cruel test, for well he loved his wife, the Princess Yasodhara. Yet, strong in his belief that each must work out his own salvation, "The Light of Asia" did not falter.

#### FIFTH INNER STAGE SCENE

*The main stage is now perfectly dark. The curtains of inner stage are drawn apart, disclosing the PRINCESS YASODHARA asleep upon a low couch. The light is a soft, rosy glow—as from a shaded lamp burning near. SIDDARTHA enters and stands looking down from back—then, as RELIGION takes up the story, he pantomimes the scene. RELIGION's lines may be read to music.*

## RELIGION :

"So with his brows he touched her feet, and bent  
 The farewell of fond eyes, unutterable  
 Upon her sleeping face, still wet with tears ;  
 And thrice he made to go, but thrice came back,  
 So strong her beauty was, so large her love ;  
 Then, o'er his head drawing his cloth, he turned  
 And raised the purdah's edge ;  
 And, lightly treading where those sleepers lay,  
 Into the night Siddartha passed, its eyes  
 The watchful stars, looked love on him ; its breath  
 The wandering wind, kissed his robe's fluttered fringe ;  
 The garden blossoms, folded for the dawn,  
 Opened their velvet hearts to waft him scents,  
 From Himalaya unto the Indian Sea,  
 A tremor spread as if the earth's soul beneath  
 Stirred with an unknown hope, Siddartha stood  
 His tearful eyes raised to the stars, and lips  
 Close set with purpose of prodigious love.  
 Then strode he forth into the gloom and cried,  
 'Channa, awake ! for now the hour is come when I should quit  
 This golden prison, where my heart lives caged,  
 To find the truth ; which henceforth I will seek,  
 For all men's sake, until the truth be found.' " \*

*(As SIDDARTHA—with uplifted arm, as though following a light—goes off at lower L, the curtains of inner stage close slowly. RELIGION continues—in the voice of one telling a story)*

And so Prince Siddartha became a begging, homeless hermit ; and although he spent many years in fasting and self-mortification, it was made clear to him at last that not by abuse of the body could a path to peace be obtained, but by the death of desire, and the following of the Eightfold Path. His life was pure ; he was compassionate to all ; he practised self-denial ; he taught that only if man has cut the meshes of passion, ignorance,

\* From Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*.

and sin can he escape the net of transmigration and be worthy of Nirvana.

MOTHERHOOD: What is Nirvana?

RELIGION: It is a blowing out of a candle; it is the highest happiness; it is to be reabsorbed into the Supreme Essence from which we came.

#### SIXTH INNER STAGE SCENE

*A gong off stage strikes three times; the curtains of the inner stage part and there enter from the R four begging BUDDHIST PRIESTS, each in yellow robe and with alms-bowl in hand. They sit in line across the stage, and men and women passing drop a few vegetables or fruit into the bowls.*

CHORUS:

Unto each one a life of Poverty—  
Vowed to Obedience and Chastity—  
And through Good Deeds—  
Karma to gather for Eternity. . . . Brahm! . . . Brahm!

FIRST WOMAN (*Down L, pointing to one of the women before the priests*) Why does she weep and give money to the priest?

SECOND WOMAN: She would have him pray for her father.

FIRST WOMAN: What is the matter with her father?

SECOND WOMAN: Her venerable father is no more. Yesterday he became a Buddha.

(*While the chorus is repeated the FOUR BUDDHIST PRIESTS rise and come down, two on each side of the inner stage. The curtains close softly behind them*)

CHORUS:

Unto each one a life of Poverty—  
Vowed to Obedience and Chastity—  
And through Good Deeds—  
Karma to gather for Eternity. . . . Brahm! . . . Brahm!

MOTHERHOOD: Why does she call her father "a Buddha"?

RELIGION: A Buddha means "an enlightened one"; but when they speak of "THE BUDDHA," they refer to Siddartha—a name to which the hearts of many millions still thrill. You will find its followers in CHINA—(*A gong sounds; from between the curtains of the inner stage steps a symbolic figure of CHINA*); in the Island of JAPAN—(*A clash of cymbals; JAPAN steps from between the curtains and stands at R of CHINA*); in BURMA, where the tinkling bells of the pagodas chant his praise—(*There is a tinkling of Japanese wind-bells, and a girl representing BURMA steps from between the curtains and stands at L of CHINA*). As in any religion, countless changes and superstitions crept in as years went by; but it is with the source that we are concerned. How seems the faith to you, O Seeker?

THE SEEKER (*Rising and speaking as though he were groping for his words*) Everyone seems working for himself alone. Is individual purity and self-discipline to be the sole end of life? This does not meet my needs; I seek a Universal Brotherhood.

MOTHERHOOD (*Thoughtfully*) This doctrine of Karma—I should not care to teach my children to do right merely for their own personal advantage; there should be something higher.

MALAYU (*Sadly*) It seems a long, long way to this Nirvana!

INDIA (*Wistfully*) The Princess Yasodhara had to bring up her little son alone.

*(At this all four shake their heads as though dismissing Buddhism)*

RELIGION:

Then, O Beautiful Name of the Far East,  
Thou dost not meet the present needs of man!

(NOTE.—*This is properly the end of the Third Episode, but the action continues without intermission*)

## FOURTH EPISODE

## OTHER ALTARS TO OTHER GODS

CHINA (*Stepping down from steps of inner stage*) Wait! Perhaps from the vast land I represent will come the truth you seek.

MOTHERHOOD: What does he mean? I thought he followed Buddha.

CHINA: Three ancient faiths are mine. Before three altars may I bow.

MALAYU: What! All at once?

CHINA: They do not conflict. The Buddha has always been broad enough to embrace them all. Come with me and we shall reason of the Tao Tê Ching. Come with me and we shall talk of the Tao.

THE SEEKER: What is this Tao?

CHINA: It is the source of all things. How shall I tell you what it is? "The Tao that may be ta'od is not the eternal Tao."

THE SEEKER: How shall man learn of it?

CHINA: By not striving to learn of it at all. He shall yield himself to it unresistingly—giving up all pursuit, that he may float peacefully along the stream of time, and be one with Tao. "Not To Act is the source of all power."

THE SEEKER (*Springing to his feet*) Sophistry! Away with it! I would rather see my soul overwhelmed in the fight—yes, even for a wrong idea—than be smothered in a sluggish slough of unresisting stagnation.

CHINA (*Shrugging his shoulders deprecatingly*) You might have learned much of spirits—and demons—and ways of magic; but as you will. Then perhaps you will listen to the great Confucius—to whom nothing mattered so much as the pursuit of knowledge and the setting of a good example.

THE SEEKER: What did he chiefly teach?

CHINA: Reverence. Reverence for the state—for parents—the past—for ancestors; he was a very wise and good man.

THE SEEKER: Reverence is a good thing. But what of a future life? Of God?

CHINA: He was not certain of a future life—nor of a personal God; he would not speak of what he was not certain.

THE SEEKER: But of what was he certain?

CHINA: THE PAST. At least, he could be sure of that—for none of us would be here if it were not for our ancestors; therefore he taught the Worship of Ancestors.

MOTHERHOOD (*Horrified*) But I would not see my children chained to the past; in that there can be no progress. It is to the Future we must look.

MALAYU (*Sadly*) I want a personal God. If not one that I may see in stone or wood—at least one that I may imagine in my heart. What do I know of SOURCE or ESSENCE, of BRAHM or TAO? I am very ignorant—I must have something I can understand.

(*To three strokes of the Chinese gong off stage,*  
CHINA steps down to MALAYU with a gesture of invitation.  
MALAYU shakes his head and folds his arms across his breast. JAPAN and BURMA have stepped down to the group at R of stage. At the last stroke of the gong is heard the MUEZZIN's call to prayer)

MUEZZIN (*Off stage*)

Allahu—akbar! Allahu—akbar!

Ashadu an la ila ha il lalla

Ashadu an la Muhammad arrasul Uhlah!

(*As the CHORUS sings softly the curtains of inner stage part, showing an ARAB CHIEF and a MOHAMMEDAN MISSIONARY in the act of prayer*)

## SEVENTH INNER STAGE SCENE

**CHORUS:**

La Illah il' Allah—the call to prayer,  
 Floats from the Minaret—on the air;  
 There is no God but Allah—the Faithful say,  
 La Illah il' Allah—his children pray.

**THE SEEKER:** Who is this Allah—you bring from out the desert?

(*The MOHAMMEDAN MISSIONARY comes down from the inner stage; the curtains close behind him. He carries a scimeter and a copy of the Koran*)

**MOHAMMEDAN:** He is God above, the everlasting God; he does not beget and he is not begotten; and there is no one equal to him. (*He crashes down to the altar and thrusts the Buddha from its place*) Away with this idolatry! Say, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet." The great Mohammed would have his disciples spread his faith with fire and sword if needful. (*He reaches for the nearest WOMAN and drags her to her knees*) Say "La Illah il' Allah!"

**THE WOMAN** (*In a trembling voice*) La Illah il' Allah. . . .

**MOHAMMEDAN:** Allah be praised! There is one more saved. And you—(*He drags the BRAHMAN PRIEST to the side of the kneeling woman and flings him to his knees*) Testify! Testify! Say, "There is no God but Allah!"

**BRAHMAN PRIEST:** Would you have me kneel beside this woman? She is an outcast!

**MOHAMMEDAN:** There are no outcasts with Allah except the unbelievers. All those who testify to the name of Allah are the same with him: the beggar and the prince, the merchant and the priest, are alike to the One and Only. The Faithful shall enjoy the same Paradise, and the unfaithful taste the same punishment.

**THE SEEKER** (*Straightening up*) At least, that is something gained. Ye are all then brothers—children of this Allah?

MOHAMMEDAN : We are like ants upon the plain to Allah—the great, the All-knowing One.

THE SEEKER : Ants upon the plain ? No more than that ?

MOTHERHOOD : Does he not care what happens to those who believe in him—who worship him ?

MOHAMMEDAN (*Opening the Koran*) "The fate of every man has he bound about his neck. He misleadeth whom he pleaseth and guideth whom he pleaseth aright. Everything in the fate of man is fixed by inevitable decree."

THE SEEKER : But what is the use of trying if that is so ?

MALAYU : Tell me of my soul that is full of ignorance and evil ; what must I do to save that ?

MOHAMMEDAN : There is neither good nor evil. All is the will of Allah. Whether you steal a sweetmeat—or kill a man—it is the will of Allah, or you would not do it. Therefore, why repent ? It is the will of Allah.

MOTHERHOOD : But if that is so, will Allah not have compassion if we sin ?

MOHAMMEDAN :

His the will that did predestinate  
To Heaven or Hell ;  
We but the slaves that bow beneath  
His omnipresent spell.

THE SEEKER : I thought I saw a glimmer of the light—and now, all 's dark again. Oh, these paths that wind and wind—we are like little children crying in the night.

RELIGION (*Softly*)

I am the germ of Truth for which men seek  
The Divine Idea for which they gladly die.  
I am Religion, and whoso gropes for me  
Will hear God's voice in answer to his cry.

(NOTE.—*This is the end of the Fourth Episode, but the action continues without intermission*)

### INTERLUDE OF MUSIC AND ACTION

#### CHORUS:

God of the Pagan, God of the Brahman,  
 God of the sorrowing children of the race;  
 God of the Buddhist, God of the Moslem,  
 Each have I been—in each have found some grace.  
 For each adds its chord to that great hymn of Faith,  
 And ye who would anew the Chirst-Child find,  
 Follow where I lead—in tolerance and love,  
 For many are the paths that wind and wind;

Many are the paths—and devious the ways—  
 But each draws us nearer to God's throne of Grace;  
 For I am that need that dwells in every heart,  
 The universal hunger of the human race.

*(When the Interlude is over, the whole stage is filled with people of the different faiths; but now—instead of being scattered among the chorus, all who have taken part in different Episodes are grouped together: Spirit-Worshipers on steps of inner stage; Buddhists and Brahmans to the R and L, etc.)*

### FINALE

#### CHRISTIANITY

*To the soft music of the Lullaby used in the Prologue, MARY, a little child in modern summer dress, runs lightly in, as though chasing a butterfly. She darts quickly down to the middle of the stage, drops on one knee and very cautiously lowers her hat to the floor. Then she lifts one side of it carefully, and her face changes from happy expectation to disappointment.*

MARY: Oh, it got away! I didn't catch it, after all.

(*From the moment MARY appears, MOTHERHOOD, as though drawn by a magnet, comes toward the child. She drops to her knees beside her and holds out her arms*)

MOTHERHOOD: What were you trying to catch, darling?

MARY (*Rising and going to MOTHERHOOD*) A butterfly . . . a pretty butterfly! . . . You know—(*Very distinctly*) Daddy says—the ancient Greeks thought a butterfly was a soul.

MOTHERHOOD: Did they? Why, what a pretty thought! And why do you want to catch a soul, sweetheart?

MARY: Don't you know?

MOTHERHOOD: No.

MARY: For one of the little girls that has n't got a soul . . . of course, that is, they really have one . . . only they don't know it.

INDIA (*Who has been drawing nearer on the R of MOTHERHOOD, now stands clinging shyly to her*) But a girl . . . a girl has n't any soul.

(*MOTHERHOOD, still kneeling, puts an arm about each child, and looks from one to the other, smiling rather sadly. JOHN enters—from the L—as though following MARY. He is reading from a little Testament, and only raises his head when MARY speaks*)

MARY (*Speaking across MOTHERHOOD to INDIA*) Of course, you have a soul! Did n't I learn a verse just this morning . . . how did it go? . . . "Are we not all children of one Father? Hath not one God created us?"

(*MOTHERHOOD rises. By this time the music of the Lullaby should be about finished. JOHN comes down to R of the group*)

THE SEEKER: Children of one Father?

JOHN (*Down L of THE SEEKER*) Yes, Brother. . . . Why not?

THE SEEKER (*Thoughtfully*) Children of one Father. . . . But I heard something like that a moment since, and it meant nothing . . . nothing!

JOHN: Because it was used in a religion as barren as its God—"who does not beget, and is not begotten"; a religion that cannot grow—and therefore cannot change. But I bring you a merciful and a loving God—a Father! who calls you not slaves—nor servants—but sons of God, heirs to his kingdom. A religion that is a living thing—growing—changing—moving ever upward and outward to a broader understanding of the principles of its divine Founder.

THE SEEKER: I am so tired . . . can you tell me in a few words what your faith means to you?

JOHN: In *two* words, Brother. . . . LOVE and SERVICE.

THE SEEKER (*Rising*) Love . . . and Service . . . and you call me "Brother." And all these weary, sinful ones—are they your sisters?

JOHN: Why not? Are we not all "children of one Father"?

THE SEEKER: But *they* do not worship this same God that you call "Father"?

JOHN (*With a smile half whimsical—half pitying*) Who can say that—save God himself?

MOTHERHOOD (*A little shocked*) But these people—some of them—believe in demons.

JOHN (*With a smile of wonderful contentment*) Is it so? Well, I follow a Master who must have believed in demons too, for certainly, when he saw the need of it, he cast them out. . . . Ah, Spirit of Motherhood—with eyes that see so far into the future, can you not follow where the vision leads?

MOTHERHOOD: I can. . . . But I must have a light.

JOHN : And you, Brother ?

THE SEEKER : I need the handclasp of my fellow men.

JOHN : Religion, what hast thou to offer ? Canst thou show the way ?

#### EIGHTH INNER STAGE SCENE

*To the music of the prologue, RELIGION, who since the entrance of JOHN has come slowly down to just back of the altar, now turns and with raised hand goes to the steps of the inner stage. Her hand glows with a rosy light [a small pocket torch held in her palm] and as she touches the curtains of the inner stage they part. On a slight elevation C stands CHRISTIANITY. All about at her feet are clustered THE POOR and THE SICK, and directly in front, clinging about her knees, Two RAGGED LITTLE CHILDREN.*

*(Let this tableau be as forcible as you can make it, for it must grip the heart of the audience and make it feel the need for Christianity in the world at the present time)*

*All those on the main stage have turned and are looking reverently toward CHRISTIANITY. After a slight pause, RELIGION falls upon one knee on the steps of the inner stage, her glowing hand pointing at CHRISTIANITY.*

RELIGION (*Entreatingly*) Speak, O Gracious One ! What dost thou stand for in the world today ?

CHRISTIANITY :

First for a manger in a lowly stall,  
A new-born Babe close at his mother's breast ;  
And shepherds kneeling there among the kine—  
And Wise Men following from the East—a star !  
Then—for a life of Service and of Love ;  
A life well-spent about his Father's work ;  
A faith that held unto the bitter end ;  
Divine compassion that forgave his foes.  
For a Creator—and a Saviour too ;

For the Good Shepherd seeking for the lost;  
For Calvary—and for the Resurrection Morn;  
God's Love is my scepter—his Service is my crown.

(*As CHRISTIANITY finishes the music stops—a little sigh goes up from all*)

MALAYU (*Taking a step toward her, timidly*) And is there room in this faith, indeed, for those like me? the weak and ignorant—and sore-oppressed?

CHRISTIANITY: Listen to what the Master said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

MOTHERHOOD: What of the children?

CHRISTIANITY: "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

THE SEEKER (*With intense wistfulness*) If I could . . . but see! . . .

JOHN: It is not with the eyes of the body, but with the eyes of faith that you must look, Brother.

(*THE SEEKER falls upon his knees, facing—not the vision—but the audience, his head thrown back, his eyelids closed*)

CONTRALTO SOLO:

"Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened  
And the ears of the deaf unstopped.  
Then shall the lame leap as an hart,  
And the tongue of the dumb shall sing."

(*While this is being sung the whole stage is gradually flooded with amber light*)

THE SEEKER (*Rising slowly to his feet—staring straight before him—and speaking in a voice of wondering exaltation*) The light! . . . The everlasting light! . . . I see the light!

(*Tenderly, compassionately, MOTHERHOOD comes down on his L, puts her right arm across his shoulder*)

*and turns him—pointing to the vision of CHRISTIANITY. Reverently they go up toward the inner stage)*

*(While the CHORUS sings softly—gradually growing in volume—those of the participants nearest the inner stage kneel, leaving the outer circle still standing. JOHN goes up back of the altar, opens his Testament and stands in silent prayer. MARY takes INDIA by the hand and draws her near the altar, where they kneel together. Grouped about the altar are CHINA, JAPAN, BURMA, TANAH MALAYU—the center of ANIMISM group—is kneeling at L of stage. As the CHORUS progresses, all those off stage at the beginning of the FINALE gradually come back; SIDDARTHA and THE BRAHMANS working down R of stage. Those of the CHORUS who were on the steps come up on to the main stage. By the time the last two lines of music are reached all are kneeling with hands stretched upward—so that the picture seen from the front is one of UPLIFTED ARMS. MOTHERHOOD and THE SEEKER have gone very slowly to the steps of the inner stage, standing there until the close of the chorus, when they kneel—opposite RELIGION)*

#### FULL CHORUS:

“Come unto Me, come unto Me,  
All ye that labor and are heavy-laden,  
And I will give you rest.  
Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me:  
For I am meek and lowly in heart;  
And ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

*Slow Curtain*

*(NOTE.—If you have no curtain, it will, of course, be necessary to get the people off the platform. Use the music of the Pro-*

*logue for a Recessioncl, and have the audience [if possible] join in the singing. Keep curtains of inner stage open until the main stage is empty, closing them slowly on the tableau of CHRISTIANITY during the last bars of the music)*

## LAROLA \*

BY

HELEN L. WILLCOX

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## CHARACTERS

ELINOR DAGGETT, wife of the missionary.

WALTER DAGGETT, an American missionary in Palinow.

NANAK, a servant in the Mission.

MARNA, a Hindu Bible woman from Chaibassa; an old friend of Larola.

LAROLA, a widow of Chaibassa.

LELA, a young Brahman woman; wife of Chunder Mohan, who has become a Christian; a near neighbor of the missionaries.

PROFESSOR BINDER SEN, of the General Assembly College in Calcutta; a friend of the missionaries.

A BRAHMAN WOMAN, a neighbor of the missionaries.

## LAROLA

*The living room of the mission bungalow at Palinow in Bengal, India. There are three doors; one at R back, leading to the outside door; one at L front, leading to WALTER DAGGETT'S study; and one at L back, leading to the inner parts of the house. There is a window at R. A table, on which are books and magazines, occupies the center of the room. Near it, at R front, is an easy chair. The furniture and ornaments should suggest India. There may be rich hangings on the walls, and an embroidered Indian cloth thrown over the table.*

*ELINOR DAGGETT sits in the easy chair, R front, reading. Presently she drops her book in her lap and gazes dreamily into the distance.*

*WALTER DAGGETT enters, L front. He is dressed for the street and carries a sun hat.*

WALTER:

You—idle?—sad? What is it, Elinor?

ELINOR:

Oh, Walter, I am thinking of that wife  
Of Chunder Mohan's! What a choice is hers!  
If loyal to her husband, she becomes  
As dead to all her family, all her caste;  
And if she yields to *their* entreaties—then  
Her husband must become as dead to her!

WALTER:

Her problem is not hers alone; no Brahman  
Ever yet has come to Christ whose wife  
Had not to choose between her husband and—  
Her world.

ELINOR:

But Lela is so young!

WALTER:

I know.  
She seems a child.

ELINOR:

I wish that I could help!

WALTER:

You love her, Elinor, and that is much.

ELINOR

(*After a slight pause*)

You go to meet Professor Binder Sen?

WALTER

(*Nodding assent*)

It may be that he knows the youth; 'twas in  
Calcutta Chunder Mohan found the truth.

ELINOR:

Calcutta! True—I had forgotten that.

Oh, let us ask him! I should like to know  
The husband worthy, 'ere I urge the wife.

NANAK

(*Appearing at door, R back*)

The Bible woman from Chaibassa waits.

ELINOR:

Bid her come in, Nanak.

(*To WALTER*)

Good-by, my dear.

WALTER:

Good-by. We shall be here in half an hour.

(WALTER goes out, R back. ELINOR rises and puts away her book. MARNA enters, R back, evidently excited. She salaams hastily)

MARNA:

Mem Sahib may recall—I told you of  
A Brahman widow in Chaibassa who  
Was very near decision for the Christ?

ELINOR:

You mean—Larola? Has she——?

MARNA:

She has come!

ELINOR:

But what will happen, Marna? Is she safe?

MARNA:

Her safety lies in flight, Mem Sahib. Watched  
And closely watched, for many a year, her fate,  
If found in open avowal of her faith,  
Would be severe.

ELINOR (*Eagerly*)

Will she come here, to us?

MARNA:

Mem Sahib, she is not like others! She  
Has read and thought and studied deeply.

ELINOR:

Where is she, Marna?

But

MARNA:

I may bring her in?

ELINOR:

Yes, yes, if she is here! Risk no delay!

MARNA

(*Starting to go and turning back*)

Professor Binder Sen—he comes today?

WALTER:

The Sahib has just gone to meet him now.

You know him, Marna?

MARNA:

Many years ago——

(*She breaks off suddenly and goes out, R back.  
NANAK enters quietly, but evidently suppressing some  
excitement. He looks out of the window, then turns  
to ELINOR*)

NANAK:

Mem Sahib, people come by scores, on foot,  
And in their bullock carts, to see the rites  
Performed at Chunder Mohan's funeral.

ELINOR:

His funeral! Nanak! He is not dead?

NANAK:

Not dead in body. Dead in soul—to all  
Good Brahmins.

ELINOR:

Ah! poor Lela! Then it is  
Her fatal day of choice! And I can do  
No more.

(MARNA enters, followed by LAROLA, *the widow of Chaibassa*. NANAK slips out, ELINOR goes to LAROLA and takes her hand)

My sister, in the name of Christ  
I welcome you. May he console your heart  
For all that you forsake!

LAROLA:

I thank Mem Sahib  
Far more than I can say. But if today  
You'd meet my heart in truest sympathy,  
You must rejoice! Forsaking pain, despair,  
Yearnings unutterable, and restless fears,  
I come. These to forsake demands no pity.  
It seemed to me the little birds along  
The way sang pæans of victory, and all  
For me! Nay, not alone for me! For Christ,  
Because another soul is gathered in  
His hand.

ELINOR:

Indeed, we all rejoice.

(ELINOR leads LAROLA to a chair. She and MARNA also sit down)

And you  
Escaped detection in your flight?

LAROLA:

It was  
The day of all days for our purpose, was  
If not, my faithful Marna? Oh, Mem Sahib,  
If you but knew the loyalty and love  
With which she has surrounded, guided, and  
Encouraged me through all these days of doubt  
And struggle!

ELINOR:

I have guessed somewhat.

LAROLA:

The flight  
So feared and dreaded was no flight at all!  
We left an empty bungalow where nought  
But lizards chirping to themselves about the walls  
Disturbed the silence of the rooms. Some feast—  
A family day—a birth—a wedding—how  
Should I, a widow, know the truth? It did  
Not matter what the cause; enough to know  
The house would be left empty, I alone.  
And Marna, always there when needed, came  
Upon the very day I heard the plans.  
For, though we have been friends by stealth since they  
Discovered Marna's change of faith, she seems  
To know more than myself of what they do.

MARNA:

There are some homes that do not shut me out—  
And people talk of what your family does.

LAROLA:

To her I whispered, "Lo, the hour has struck."  
And so, we also made our plans. While all  
The rest were climbing into bullock carts

Before the gate, I waited anxiously  
Within the house for Marna, who at last  
Came breathlessly across the fields——

MARNA:

I saw  
The carts go by, from where I lay behind  
Some bushes near the road. I knew 'twas safe.

ELINOR:

And then—you walked the distance?

LAROLA:

No!—We hid  
Ourselves in a farmer's load of hay. He drove  
A horse, and so we made the journey in  
Three days.

MARNA:

And passed the others jolting on  
The road!

LAROLA:

Were they too bound for Palinow?

ELINOR:

The only gathering of which I know  
In Palinow today is sad enough—  
The funeral of a man who is not dead!

(MARNA looks anxiously toward LAROLA and speaks  
hastily, as if to ward off further explanation)

MARNA:

Perhaps they went beyond, to Sasseram,  
Or even to Benares. Cousins of  
The family live there, do they not?

LAROLA

(Vaguely)

I do not know—I think so—I have not  
Been there.

ELINOR:

It is some months, I think, that you  
Have been considering this step?

LAROLA

(*With an effort*)

Mem Sahib,

Many a year ago I longed to come.  
I cannot tell you how it happened that  
I knew the Christ. That time is too far off!  
No, no—I mean it is too near! I dare  
Not—*must* not tell! It would bring back the fire  
That only since I gave myself to Christ  
Has ceased to scorch my soul.

(LELA runs in and throws herself at ELINOR's feet)

MARNA

(*Rising hastily as LELA enters*)

Oh! Lela!

(ELINOR rises and tries to lift the girl)

LELA:

I  
Am lost! A widow! I must shave my hair!  
They say I must become a widow—shave  
My head and dress in white—give up my jewels—  
They come from miles around to see the rites!  
They say my lord is dead! He is not dead!

(LAROLA has risen slowly, seeming fascinated by  
LELA. MARNA is watching her with interest and  
anxiety)

ELINOR:

No, Lela! He is living—waiting for  
His faithful wife to join him—him, and Christ.

LELA

(*Rising hopelessly*)

Mem Sahib, they perform the funeral rites  
Today. I ran away to say farewell  
To you, for nevermore shall you behold  
The Lela whom you loved. Today my lord  
Becomes as dead to me and all my caste.

LAROLA (*Starting forward*)

To all your caste, my daughter—that may be.  
But not to you—never to you, my child!  
Your husband—has become—a Christian?

LELA :

Yes.

LAROLA :

Come with him! Listen!

(*She hesitates, looking intently at LELA*)

Yes—to save your soul,  
I'll tear my heart from out its hiding place!  
As many years ago as you have lived—

(*She hesitates again*)  
The fate that threatens you then came to me.  
The funeral rites performed, my head was shaved,  
My jewels torn away—but oh! the gems  
They tore from off my arms and neck  
Were nothing to the treasure wrenched from out  
My heart! My spirit died within me.

LELA (*Gazing into her eyes*)

You—

But now—you are *alive*.

LAROLA :

Ah! Now—I live  
In Christ. But then—how can I make you know  
What you must suffer, if you do this thing?  
I saw *his* mother on the funeral pyre  
Of her dead lord give up her life with joy,  
In hope that they should meet in some hereafter.  
Many a time I've longed—yearned, sobbing, for  
The flames about my body, so my soul  
Might join my lord's.

ELINOR :

But—

LAROLA :

No, I know they will  
Not let us do it now. And they are right!  
And yet my wish was innocent enough.  
The blackness of the pit came afterwards!  
He married. Then I knew that in my charred  
And shriveled soul there lingered life enough  
To hate. I wished her dead, at first, but that  
Soon grew to be too easy an escape.  
He was a rare, a wondrous soul; I hoped  
At first, she could not understand and would  
Not love him. Then my soul descended deep  
And deeper into hell. I wished that she  
Might suffer what I suffered then throughout  
Eternity. I wished that even while  
She loved him, she might know my soul possessed  
His soul forever.

ELINOR

(*Marveling and speaking almost unconsciously*)  
You thought *that*?

LAROLA :

Ah! yes,  
I know, you think that is not Hindu. There  
Are things in human hearts that burn beneath  
All creeds the world around.

LELA :

Your husband? Is  
He dead?

LAROLA :

He still is living—but of him  
I cannot speak.

ELINOR:

You had no child?

LAROLA :

Yes, one—  
Born after *he* had left us. But it died.  
They said it was a girl; and I rejoiced

Then, and for years thereafter, that it had  
Escaped the life of woman on this earth.  
But now—ah, well!—to have a child, to love—  
A daughter of my own, to teach, to lead  
Into the life that's hid with Christ in God—  
I have not dreamed a dream more wonderful.

ELINOR (*Softly*)

Nor I.

LELA (*Gazing at LAROLA*)

To have had you for a mother!

LAROLA:

No,

My child, I was not worthy then to be  
Entrusted with its little soul. At first,  
I hoped that she—that other one—would have  
No child! But afterwards—'twas strange!—I heard,  
From time to time, news of that other home—  
Marna has been there. When no children came,  
I hated her the most of all for that!

LELA:

Ah! Then you never knew true jealousy!

LAROLA:

My child, true love is deeper, stronger than  
The fiercest jealousy. It cannot be,  
I think, that many souls, here even in  
Our hot and passionate East, have suffered blasts  
More withering in their heat of jealous hate  
Than mine has bowed to, in those earlier years.  
But love—what is it?—how to make you see!—  
I tell you, the soul of the man is eternal joy!  
It cannot be God gave that life to end  
In one short cycle—three score years and ten!  
God must have smiled when he had breathed that soul  
From out his universal life, to dwell

In human form! To see that spirit live  
 Again—to know he had a son, who should  
 Be like him—this desire is to think  
 God's thought, and when it entered in, my heart  
 Grew large and quiet, and the jealous fire  
 Burned low and lower—but the change was slow.  
 And—there was loneliness.

**ELINOR** (*Both she and LELA have been hushed and awed*)  
 You never saw  
 Him afterwards?

**LAROLA:**  
 Yes—once I saw him. But  
 He did not know. 'Twas in a neighboring town—  
 A moment only—chance had brought me there.  
 Marna and I had gone on errands for  
 My family. It happened he had come  
 To teach the people in the market-place.  
 I passed within ten feet of where he stood.  
 I saw him smile. It was as it had been  
 Long years before, like sunlight bursting forth  
 At close of a dark day. Since then it brings  
 A little comfort that I know the warm,  
 Enfolding smile still beams on others, though  
 I see it not.

**LELA** (*Brokenly*)  
 That would not comfort me!

**LAROLA:**  
 Not now, my child.  
 (*With great tenderness*)  
 And you will have no need,  
 I trust, of such sad comfort. You will find  
 Your peace more easily.

**A VOICE** (*Calling, from off R*)  
 Oh, Lela! come!

**LELA** (*Frightened*)

My mother calls for me! I had almost  
Forgot!

(*To LAROLA*)

Oh! let me call you "mother" once,  
Before I go—

**LAROLA:**

Before you go to say  
Farewell to *her*. Yes, now and afterwards,  
You may call me "mother," child. My little girl,  
If she had lived, would be about your age.

**LELA:**

But there will be no afterwards! I dare  
Not break with her! I've feared her all my life.  
She filled my mind with terrors. They would leave  
Me never, if I dared to break caste! No!  
The farewell is to you—

(*Turning to ELINOR*)

And you, Mem Sahib!

**THE VOICE:**

Lela! Lela!

**LELA** (*Starting up*)

I must go! Farewell!

(*She runs out. ELINOR rises and starts forward, as if to follow her*)

**ELINOR:**

Lela!

**LAROLA** (*With a strange, calm certainty*)

Fear not! She will come back.

**MARNA** (*In a low, tense voice*)

She *must*!

**ELINOR** (*Wondering and doubtful*)

You think she will come back?

LAROLA (Quietly)

I know she will.

Else why should God have brought me here today?  
 Mem Sahib, this that I have told has lain  
 For years entombed within my heart. I did  
 Not think I should have broken that reserve  
 For any one. But when I saw this girl,  
 So young, so tender, so in love with life—  
 And with her lord—so near to ruin, through  
 The fears they practise on the innocent,  
 I knew at last that all my life might hold  
 Of joy or sorrow, passion or regret,  
 Longing or hope—all, all belonged to Christ!  
 I could not give *myself* and keep *this* back,  
 Since what I am, I am because of this.  
 I thought to crowd the past into the years  
 Gone by; to make myself a new, free life  
 Which should be Christ's indeed. It is not thus  
 God builds a human soul. We do not live  
 In fragments. And the death of hopes may be  
 The burial of the grain, which preludes life.

MARNA (Who has been restlessly moving toward the door and looking out of the window)

Mem Sahib, shall I go to find some news  
 Of what is passing at the other house?

ELINOR:

Oh, Marna, do!—It may be they will let  
 You in. If you can speak with Lela, say  
 We will protect her—keep her here until  
 Her husband can be sent for.

MARNA:

Yes, Mem Sahib.

She has more reason than she knows to come.

(She goes out hastily)

ELINOR (*Moving quickly after her*)

You say——?

(*Seeing that MARNA is gone, pausing*)

I wonder what she meant by that.

(*She passes behind LAROLA to the window, at R, and stands looking out while she speaks the next words*)

Oh—could we but delay the rites until

Professor Binder Sen arrives! He has

Such power with the people.

(*Still looking from the window, ELINOR does not perceive the effect of her words upon LAROLA, who rises with a start and shrinks, terror-stricken, away from ELINOR, gazing at her in wide-eyed silence. NANAK appears at door, R back*)

ELINOR:

Oh! Nanak!

What is it? Have you news?

(*As ELINOR steps back to speak with NANAK, she of course does not turn toward LAROLA, and NANAK is too much excited to notice her evident fright. While ELINOR and NANAK are speaking, LAROLA looks furtively about for a means of escape and finally tries the door of WALTER's study, R front. When she finds that it will open, she turns back to listen, leaning heavily on the door, as if about to fall*)

NANAK:

They say the girl

Resists! The servants heard her scream. She dare  
Not long delay! 'Twill soon be over. Think!  
Her caste, her vixen of a mother, priest,  
And all the town! One girl against the lot!

ELINOR:

No! Not one girl, for Christ is at her side,  
And all his love for India fights for her!  
Is it not so——?

(*She turns to appeal to LAROLA, and seeing her almost fainting at the study door, starts forward in amazement and alarm*)

What—what is wrong? You're ill!

LAROLA (*Turning from the door and trying to stand straight, but swaying a little and speaking with great difficulty*)

No! I must go! But not the road! Is there  
A hidden path, behind the compound?

ELINOR (*In utter bewilderment*)

But—

(MARNA enters hastily, R back, and NANAK slips out)

Oh, Marna! What is this? Your friend is ill!

MARNA (*Looking at LAROLA*)

She knows! You told her?

ELINOR:

Told her—what?

MARNA:

That he

Was coming?

ELINOR:

Who—Professor Binder Sen?

MARNA (*Starting forward, as if to stop ELINOR from speaking*)  
Oh, hush!

(*As ELINOR turns in wonder from MARNA to LAROLA, the latter gains command of herself and says, in a low, intense voice, but with a touch of dignity, and even pride*)

LAROLA:

He is—my husband.

ELINOR:

He—the man?

Marna! You knew of this?

- MARNA (*Falling on her knees before LAROLA*)  
                        Forgive me! I  
                        Thought only of your happiness.
- LAROLA (*Just touching MARNA's bowed head with her hand*)  
                        My friend,  
                        You meant no harm. But happiness lies not  
                        That way. Will you go hence with me?
- MARNA (*Rising and turning to ELINOR*)  
                        Mem Sahib—  
                        Tell her! She does not know—She has not heard  
                        Of him in years—forbade my speaking—and  
                        I dared not tell.
- ELINOR:  
                        You mean she does not know—  
(*She looks inquiringly at MARNA, then draws a quick breath, goes to LAROLA, and speaks very slowly and tenderly*)  
                        My dear—he has no longer any wife—  
                        But you.
- LAROLA:  
                        No wife! She has not—?
- ELINOR:  
                        She is dead.  
(*LAROLA draws a deep breath, then bows her face on ELINOR's shoulder. ELINOR puts her arms about her, and they stand so for a moment, MARNA watching anxiously*)
- LAROLA (*Drawing away from ELINOR and speaking with entire self-possession*)  
                        Come, Marna! We must go at once. Which door—?
- MARNA (*Turning wildly to ELINOR*)  
                        Mem Sahib! Will you let it end this way?
- ELINOR:  
                        Larola! Stay!

LAROLA:

No!—since, to him, the past—  
May be the past, indeed. I'll keep my dreams!  
(*Voces are heard, off R*)

MARNA:

It is too late! They're here!

LAROLA (*Wildly*)

Mem Sahib! Hide,

Oh, hide me!

ELINOR (*Pointing to the door, L back*)

Marna, take her there! You know  
The way—my little sewing-room.

LAROLA (*Who has moved quickly to the door at the first words,  
calling to MARNA*)

Oh, come!

(LAROLA goes out, followed closely by MARNA.  
ELINOR stands undecided for a moment, turning from  
one door to the other. Just as the voices are heard  
clearly at the door, at R back, she hurries out, L back.  
WALTER and PROFESSOR BINDER SEN enter, R back,  
followed by NANAK, to whom WALTER hands a bag,  
cloak, and other articles)

WALTER:

Nanak, take these—and find your mistress, please.  
Tell her our guest is come.

(NANAK bows and goes out, L back, leaving the door  
ajar. WALTER turns to the PROFESSOR, who seems  
absorbed in thought, but always courteous)

She will be glad,  
Indeed, Professor, once again to see  
You here. We have not ceased to talk of your  
Last visit.

PROFESSOR (*Smiling*)

No? Nor I to think of it!

WALTER (*Indicating the easiest chair*)

This chair, Professor, suits you, I recall.

(*The PROFESSOR, with a smile and nod of thanks, sits in the chair indicated, while WALTER draws a lighter one nearer and sits down. He goes on speaking more seriously, as though reverting to a conversation already begun*)

And so you know the man—this Chunder Mohan!

PROFESSOR (*Speaking with an evident reserve*)

I know him well—he was my pupil once.

WALTER (*Looking hard at the PROFESSOR for a moment, as if trying to penetrate his reserve*)

You are assured—of his sincerity?

PROFESSOR (*After a perceptible pause, drawing a long breath and beginning to speak with an effort*)

None question that! His character is high—

Above reproach. Indeed, of all the boys

I've taught and loved, perhaps I loved him most.

WALTER:

How glad my wife will be!

(*Looking anxiously toward door, L back*)

I wonder what

Is keeping her so long away.

(*He starts to rise, but at a slight gesture from the PROFESSOR, he glances at his face and sinks back into his chair, wonderingly*)

PROFESSOR:

My friend,

I must be frank with you! Your tale has stirred  
The deeps of life which lie so far removed  
In the long past, that most of those who know  
Me now have never guessed them. But to-day,  
Somehow, a strange sense comes to me that this

Far distant past is here again. The fate  
Of Chunder Mohan brings it close.

WALTER (*With great respect and affection*)

I would

Not willingly have caused you pain!

(*The PROFESSOR turns to WALTER with a smile of tender friendship, puts out his hand and clasps WALTER's for a moment, then continues, still with evident effort*)

PROFESSOR :

You may

Have wondered at my bitterness toward caste—  
That iron cage which closes by degrees  
Upon its victims, bound in self-deceit!  
Here is the reason. Many years ago  
Before I gave myself to Christ, a wife  
Was mine—heart's comrade of the earliest years  
Of manhood—such a comrade as your own  
Sweet lady is to you! 'Twas not alone  
I took those first bold steps toward truth and freedom;  
*She was with me then. We read and talked*  
Together; saw the vision of the Christ,  
And what his love would do for India.  
So far we went together—on the last,  
Hard day, I stood alone! She loved me—oh,  
I am sure of that! She honored Christ. But on  
The eve of victory, she turned away.  
The iron gates of caste had clanged between.

(*He rises and moves about restlessly under the strong excitement of the memory*)

I knew that I should be forsaken by  
My caste, my family, my friends, my *world*—  
But *that!*—I had not dreamed of that. I thought  
We were irrevocably one! My wife  
Became a widow—joined the others in

The funeral rites—for me, who lived and loved  
Her!

(*He stands silent with bowed head for a moment, and WALTER goes to him and takes his hands*)

WALTER:

Oh, my friend! I had not known—or guessed—

PROFESSOR:

Nor have I ever told so much before  
To human friend.

(*After a moment's pause, he turns away and sits again*)

I thought, at length I could,  
Perhaps, forget. I found a Christian wife.

(*Turning appealingly to WALTER*)

You saw our home—did it not seem to you  
A happy one?

WALTER:

My wife and I have more  
Than once recalled the peace, the harmony,  
And gentle courtesy which made your house  
A haven of relief and rest.

PROFESSOR (*With a deep sigh*)

I'm glad

It should be so remembered. But—my friend—  
Yes, I will make a full confession now!

I found, as time went on, although I tried  
To give my heart's full homage to my wife—  
My faithful wife!—my soul grew nearer still,  
And nearer to—that other one. 'Twas pride  
That made me think I could forget. But love  
Roots deeper in the heart than pride. Do you—  
Ah, yes, I am a Christian!—But at times  
I wonder if you Westerners have dreamed  
Of woman's love like that of Hindu wives!

(*He is walking up and down the room and now turns*

*suddenly upon WALTER, who is seated again, drawing close to him silently, and seeming to hold him by his gaze, until he is almost bending over him. He speaks in a low, tense voice)*

When I was six years old, my father died.  
I saw my mother walk seven times around  
The funeral pyre—then they put the torch  
Into this hand—so small it scarce could lift  
The weight—and when my mother laid her down  
Beside the body of her lord—I gave  
The fire that released her soul—to be  
With his forever.

(WALTER has risen slowly, his eyes riveted on the PROFESSOR's with a sort of terrified fascination)

Yes—you shrink—turn pale  
With horror. Do you know, in all my life  
I have not seen a look of triumph so  
Complete, joy so exultant, as I saw  
When last I looked upon my mother's face.

WALTER (*As if breaking from a spell*)  
But—that—is—ended—now!

PROFESSOR (*Bowing his head*)

Hers was the last  
Suttee permitted under British rule—  
And they were right to end it! But I know  
That first, true wife of mine would so have gone  
To death for me. And love which follows man  
To death must live beyond it.

(ELINOR enters quietly, L back, pauses a moment, and so hears the PROFESSOR's last words, unnoticed by him or WALTER)

I know not  
If yet that comrade of my spirit lives,  
But hope grows stronger through my lengthening years  
That in the life to come we shall not fail

To find each other—no, nor she to find  
The Christ—and there, before his throne, we 'll join  
In worship and in service, as we dreamed.

(*There is a moment's hush; then ELINOR comes swiftly down to the PROFESSOR and takes his hand in both of hers, speaking very tenderly, with tears in her voice*)

ELINOR:

Professor—friend—you will not need to wait  
For that. She is alive!

PROFESSOR (*With a great start*)

My wife?—you know?

ELINOR:

And more than that—she is a Christian.

PROFESSOR:

Ah!

ELINOR:

Your faith in her is justified—and in  
Her love.

PROFESSOR:

She loves me still?

ELINOR (*Standing with bowed head for an instant, then seeming to speak to herself more than to the PROFESSOR, with humility*)

Her love—for you—

Is wonderful!

(*She looks up suddenly at WALTER in a half-timid, half-appealing way, and goes to him. The PROFESSOR is silent for a moment, then turns to ELINOR with great simplicity*)

PROFESSOR:

Where is my wife?

ELINOR:

She is

Within the house. She knows that you are here,  
But dares not come to you. She did not know  
Until to-day that you—were left alone.

PROFESSOR (*To WALTER*)

I have revealed to you my inmost heart!  
Need she have any fear to come to me?

WALTER (*Brokenly, to ELINOR*)

Tell her—my dear—to come!

ELINOR (*Glancing about the room*)

Your study, dear, would be the best. Let him  
Go in and wait there. I will bring her soon!

(*She starts to leave the room quickly, but pauses as she passes the PROFESSOR, looks searchingly into his face for a moment, then takes his hand impulsively and bows her head over it for an instant as if in homage. She goes out*)

WALTER (*Indicating the study door, at L front*)

Will you go in, Professor?

(*Starting to move toward the door, the PROFESSOR pauses suddenly, and at his exclamation, WALTER, who is just passing him to open the door, turns back*)

PROFESSOR:

Wait! My friend,  
I had not thought—I am no longer young!  
It may be she will think to find—the man  
I was!

WALTER:

If it be so, she will but learn,  
True manhood grows more beautiful with years.

(*He turns to the door, opens it, and waits for the PROFESSOR to pass in. The PROFESSOR seems lost in thought for a moment, then perceives that WALTER is waiting for him and passes slowly to the threshold, where he turns back once more and speaks hesitatingly and with an almost boyish diffidence*)

PROFESSOR:

Would you—not better—tell her—I am old?

WALTER (*Smiling at the Professor*)

And have her put no faith in any word  
Of mine forever? No! I wish your wife  
To be my friend, Professor.

PROFESSOR (*Smiling fondly, murmurs*)

Foolish one!

(*He goes into the study. WALTER closes the door, then turns away and listens for a moment, with his eyes on the door, L back. Then he walks restlessly across to the window, at R, and stands looking out absently for a moment. Suddenly he starts forward and gazes intently. NANAK enters, R back, and WALTER speaks to him in low, quick tones without turning away from the window*)

WALTER:

Nanak! There is a gathering next door?

NANAK

(*Who is fairly bursting with news*)

Yes, Sahib—Chunder Mohan's funeral!

WALTER

(*With a start*)

You mean—his caste disowns him?

NANAK:

That they do!

And like enough his wife will be disowned

As well—so things look now!

WALTER:

Why, what has passed?

Tell all you know, Nanak, and quickly!

NANAK:

Sahib,

I know but little, only Lela came

While you were gone, and this strange widow from  
Chaibassa—Marna brought her—so prevailed upon  
The girl that now she will not let them shave

Her head—they tried to force her, and we heard  
 Her screams!—she vows that she is Chunder's wife  
 Now and forever—begs to be let go!

WALTER (*Striding up and down in helpless rage*)  
 And they are holding her? Is there no law?  
 (*Stops suddenly*)  
 The widow from Chaibassa—?  
 (*Looking toward the study door*)  
 That must be—

NANAK:

I know not, Sahib, who she is, but this I know—  
 That Marna has some secret. Such an air  
 Of mystery! She whispered in my ear  
 In passing, just outside, before you came—  
 “Nanak! We *must* delay the rites—and save  
 The girl—for *her!*” I know not what she meant.

WALTER (*Absently*)  
 Nor I. But—what to do? I cannot break  
 The spell of this reunion—now!

(*Suddenly going to the window again*)  
 Nanak!

It may be you can gain me entrance there!  
 I'll do what can be done to stay their hands,  
 Until Professor Binder Sen—is free.

(ELINOR's voice is heard at L back, and WALTER, with  
 a glance in that direction and toward the study door,  
 motions to NANAK to follow him, and goes out, R  
 back, NANAK following. ELINOR enters, leading  
 LAROLA and talking gently to her. MARNA follows)

ELINOR:

Larola—dear! If you had seen his face!  
 And heard his tones! I've told—or tried to tell  
 You what he said. His voice—and eyes—you must  
 Know better than my words can tell.

LAROLA (*Drawing a sharp breath and speaking in a hushed voice*)

But that

Was long ago! Amid his loneliness,  
His dreams reach back to earlier years; he thinks  
Of me—as young—and beautiful. Ah, well!  
You wonder, but—he thought me beautiful.

ELINOR (*Gazing at her*)

I wonder—yes! I wonder—could it be  
You were more beautiful in youth than now!  
'Tis not mere dreams to which his heart turns back.  
It is the spirit of you that he loves—  
And he will wake to find you beautiful  
Beyond his dreams!

(LAROLA is silent, wondering, and ELINOR goes to the study door, puts her hand on the knob, and turns back to LAROLA. MARNA meanwhile crosses to the window and eagerly looks out. ELINOR holds out her hand pleadingly to LAROLA, and when LAROLA looks toward her, she speaks softly)

ELINOR:

Larola—come!

(LAROLA goes slowly toward her, takes her hand, and looks into her face, as if to gain courage; then ELINOR opens the door part way, and LAROLA drops her hand, and after one more instant of hesitation, goes into the study. ELINOR closes the door quickly but quietly and goes to MARNA)

ELINOR (*Her voice is thrilled with awe and tenderness*)

They are

Together, Marna! And you knew!

(Remembering suddenly)

You knew—

That he was coming here to-day!

MARNA (*Though she speaks in a lowered tone, she seems to be under an increased tension*)

I heard

It from a Bible woman in Calcutta.  
 Often she wrote to give me news of *him*—  
 For *her* sake—though I dared not speak! I, too,  
 Have had my dreams!

ELINOR (*Wondering*)

You dreamed of—*this?*

(*Glancing toward the study door*)

MARNA:

Of this—

And more! Mem Sahib, I believe, for most  
 Of us, the hope of heaven is far more  
 Than we deserve! But some brave souls—and *she*  
 Is one!—have lived *through* earth to heaven! Oh!  
 If you had watched her growing calm and strong,  
 Serene and pure, loving amidst the ones  
 Who did her wrong—you'd know that happiness  
 Will never spoil her now!

ELINOR:

You love her!

MARNA:

Ah!

(*Looking out of the window again, with sudden fierceness*)

They did her wrong! More than she knows—or I  
 Can prove, as yet.

(*She suddenly starts forward, in strong excitement*)

Oh! Lela has escaped!

(ELINOR looks from the window. She is down stage from  
 MARNA)

ELINOR:

She's coming here! Oh, Marna! Quick! The door!

(They both start to open the door, but NANAK throws  
 it open and rushes in)

NANAK:

Mem Sahib! Lela is outside! She comes—

**LELA** (*Running in and throwing herself into ELINOR's arms*)  
I come to you, Mem Sahib! Save me! She  
Will try to drag me back—back to their chains!

ELINOR (*Drawing LELA down stage*)  
No! You are free!

(WALTER comes in quickly, and NANAK closes the door as soon as he is inside, and stands with his back against it. MARNA follows ELINOR and LELA down, at R. WALTER comes down L)

**LELA**      (*Trying to steady herself, drawing a great breath*)  
                        I have chosen Christ—and him—  
My husband!

(There is a sudden attempt to enter the door that NANAK is holding, and then a great pounding on it, and a fierce, shrill cry from without, NANAK meanwhile holding the door with all his might)

## BRAHMAN WOMAN (*Without*)

Open! Let me in!

WALTER:

Nanak !

We must bar no one out! Let her come in!

(NANAK, after an instant's hesitation, lets go the door with a shrug of disgust. LELA at the same instant falls on her knees, clinging to ELINOR. The BRAHMAN WOMAN enters and crosses to within a little distance from WALTER, after assuring herself by a glance that LELA is there. She speaks with shrill contempt)

## BRAHMAN WOMAN:

You think you would have need of bars to keep  
A Brahman woman—from your house accursed?  
No power could have dragged me to pollute  
Myself by entering, unless that child  
*(Pointing fiercely to LELA, who shrinks closer to  
ELINOR. She addresses her next words to the latter,  
moving toward her)*

Had been entrapped and led astray by your  
Deceitful wiles!

(*She stands threateningly over LELA, who is between her and ELINOR, still clinging desperately to the latter*)

Now, girl, I've tracked you down  
To your low, outcast haunt—you'll come with me!

(*She starts to lay forcible hands on LELA, who screams and jumps to her feet, as ELINOR draws her away.*

*WALTER steps forward quickly*)

WALTER:

Woman! It is our duty to protect  
This girl, who, in this room, a moment since,  
Declared herself a Christian.

BRAHMAN WOMAN (*With a scream of rage*)

Ah!

WALTER (*Speaking with an energy and determination that cows the woman's bravado*)

Unless

Before the law you prove your right, we shall  
Not suffer that a Christian man and wife  
Be parted 'gainst their will! What is your claim?

BRAHMAN WOMAN (*Evidently seeing that her case is lost, but raging at defeat, bitterly*)

My claim? My claim is that I've wasted half  
A lifetime over that ungrateful wretch!

(*Pointing at LELA, who has taken heart at WALTER'S words, but shrinks back at the woman's bitter scorn*)

I might have known the taint of Christian blood  
Could not be purified!

(*WALTER and ELINOR lean forward with breathless interest. NANAK, in the background, takes a step forward. MARNA, who has all this time been watching the scene with intense absorption, puts her hand to her breast with a great gasp of relief. No one notices*

*her, however. LELA moves a little forward, away from ELINOR's protecting arm, becoming fearless in her amazement)*

LELA      (*Slowly and wonderingly*)  
                        Of—Christian—blood?

BRAHMAN WOMAN (*More and more bitterly*)

Since that has proved the stronger in the end—  
Stronger than all the care and pains I 've spent  
To make a Brahman of you—save you from  
Your fate—you 'd better know the truth. No child  
Of mine are you!

LELA      (*Dazed*)  
                        You 're not my mother, then?

BRAHMAN WOMAN:

Ha! You are glad? And so am I! Glad  
To be free from fear of that disgrace I knew  
You 'd bring upon us in the end!

LELA :  
                        But how—?

BRAHMAN WOMAN (*Rapidly*)  
How was it that I stooped to call you mine?  
I 'll tell you! *She*—your mother—had been led  
Astray, as *you* have been. Her husband left  
His caste—his family—to follow these  
False teachers from the West!

(*Indicating WALTER with a contemptuous gesture*)

LELA      (*Moving farther forward in eager wonder*)  
                        My father—was  
A Christian?

BRAHMAN WOMAN (*Thrown into fresh rage by the awed gladness in LELA's voice and face*)

On the day when he disowned  
His faith, he *died*—to all good Brahmans! Yes,

And to your mother, too, for she was true—  
True, outwardly, at least, to faith and caste.  
When you were born, she was a widow.

(ELINOR suddenly looks toward MARNA, and seeing the intense joy and satisfaction in her face, stretches out her arms impulsively toward LELA, but draws back as the woman goes on speaking, and waits, breathing hard, and poised as if for a quick movement forward)

But

Her family—hers and mine, I almost shame  
To say—for we are cousins—

LELA (With a quick, low cry)

"Are"? Oh, then,

My mother is alive?

BRAHMAN WOMAN (*Impatiently, as if wishing she could withdraw her words*)

Alive or dead,

I know not! But they feared she had been led  
So far by her apostate husband that  
It was not safe to trust your bringing up  
To her. She would have filled your infant soul  
With poison! As for me—the only child  
I ever had was born and died upon  
The day when *she* gave birth to *you*.

(Her voice becomes less harsh)

They brought

You here—some three days' journey—told  
Her you were dead. She never doubted—was  
Too ill for days to care for anything.

MARNA (Suddenly losing control of herself, in a loud voice)  
She never doubted? No! There is not guile  
Enough in that pure soul to dream of such  
Black devil's work!

(Starting toward study door)

Larola!

(*The BRAHMAN WOMAN gives a great start and shrinks back, gazing at the study door as if expecting to see a ghost. LELA is too dazed to move. There is a breathless hush for a moment, all gazing toward the study door. The door is opened from within, and PROFESSOR BINDER SEN and his wife appear. At sight of them, the BRAHMAN WOMAN falls back, gasping for breath. LELA unconsciously brings her hands together as in an attitude of prayer and gazes with a reverential awe at LAROLA. No one speaks. The PROFESSOR and his wife come into the room and stand waiting, at L front)*

BRAHMAN WOMAN (*Struggling for breath*)

'Tis a plot!

(*Turning to ELINOR*)

You brought them here—to take my child from me!

(*To WALTER*)

Oh, pity! Sahib! She is *mine!* Since her  
Third day, I've nursed her, clothed her, cared for her—  
And loved her! Surely mine is greater right  
Than *hers*—

(*Pointing toward LAROLA*)

Who only gave her life!

LAROLA (*Moving a step forward, gazing at LELA with an absorbed wonder and inability to believe the truth entirely. She speaks low and wonderingly*)

My child?

My daughter?

(*LELA starts to move quickly to LAROLA, but the BRAHMAN WOMAN steps forward and intervenes*)

BRAHMAN WOMAN:

Wait!

(*Grasping LELA's arm, she turns to WALTER*)

Sahib—you talk of law—

Is *this* your law? To let a child forsake

A mother who has loved her all her life  
For one who never looked upon her face  
Until this moment? Say!

LAROLA (*Seeming hardly to hear the woman's voice*)  
My baby? You?

PROFESSOR (*Softly*)  
I never knew—

WALTER (*Answering the woman*)  
It is for her to choose.  
Lela must choose herself which one shall be  
Her mother now.  
(*The woman takes a firmer grip of LELA's arm*)  
And she must be left free  
To make her choice alone!

(*The woman unwillingly releases her hold and draws back a little, awed, in spite of herself, by WALTER's tone of authority. LELA, after a barely perceptible pause, goes to LAROLA with not even a backward look. She moves slowly, but as if in reverence, not in doubt. LAROLA takes a step forward to meet her and folds her in her arms. LELA's head rests on her bosom, and LAROLA bows her own over it. There is silence for a moment. The PROFESSOR stands with bowed head; WALTER, also. ELINOR, MARNA, and NANAK are all watching the BRAHMAN WOMAN, who follows LELA's movement tensely until she is in LAROLA's arms, then turns away in evident despair and moves uncertainly toward the door, R back. NANAK quietly goes to the door and holds it open. The woman turns just as she reaches the door, holds her arms out blindly for an instant toward LELA, then, drawing her chudder over her face with a gesture of despair, she goes out. NANAK goes out after her, closing the door softly. ELINOR breathes a sigh of relief, and WALTER looks up, sees that the woman is gone, and crosses to*

ELINOR's side. LELA lifts her head and looks into LAROLA's face)

LELA (Softly)

You, then, are twice

My mother!

LAROLA (Taking LELA's face between her hands and marveling over her)

You!

LELA:

You are the mother of

My soul! This very hour, but for you,

I had been lost. You saved me! As I give

Myself to Christ, I dedicate to you

The years to come

LAROLA (Turning to the PROFESSOR, happily)

And to your father, child!

(The PROFESSOR has moved behind them until, when LAROLA speaks, he is a little to the R of LELA, as she turns to him, and a little upstage, so that the three are partly facing ELINOR and WALTER. LELA turns to the PROFESSOR and puts out her hand slowly, looking wonderingly into his face. He takes her hand in both of his and draws closer to her. LELA's other arm is around LAROLA. LAROLA looks from one to the other)

We three—together!

PROFESSOR:

We shall join, on earth,

In worship, and in service, as we dreamed.

WALTER (Stepping forward with hand outstretched to the PROFESSOR, joyfully and solemnly triumphant)

So, once again, Christ breaks the bonds of caste.

(The PROFESSOR takes his hand, but without dropping LELA's)

ELINOR (Starting to join the group, but pausing, looking straight out, and speaking as if she had seen a sudden vision)

So shall all India be free—at last!

THE FRIEND OF ALL MEN

from

THE LIFTED CROSS \*

BY

ANITA B. FERRIS

\* Reprint from the Century Co., New York, 15 cents.

## CHARACTERS

THIRTEEN ASSYRIAN CHRISTIAN REFUGEES.

THREE YOUNG MEN—*young men.*

ONE OLD WOMAN—*mature woman made up.*

FIVE YOUNG WOMEN—*young women.*

FOUR CHILDREN—*2 girls and 2 boys—children from seven to ten years of age.*

NINE MOSLEM BANDITS.

A MISSIONARY AND HIS WIFE.

SCENE—*A mountain pass in Urumia, Persia.*

TIME—*Early period of the war.*

MUSIC—“*The Sure Hope*”—Armenian song—published by Near East Relief, 1 Madison Avenue, New York City—Sung by hidden choir.

LIGHT—*Dim and cold; last flare of sunset at rescue, ending in night at close.*

## THE FRIEND OF ALL MEN

*(Behind the scenes the first and third stanzas of the Armenian song "Sure Hope" are softly yet distinctly sung)*

Let the wind blow cold, let it beat my face,  
    Let the clouds above heavy snowflakes fling,  
Let the north wind blow, raging all it will,  
    Yet I live in hope soon or late comes spring.

Let harsh trials come, persecutions rage,  
    And the light grow dim of the sun on high;  
To Armenian hearts, pain is naught to dread,  
    But the poor man's hope must not fade and die!

*(As the last words are dying away, enter the THIRTEEN REFUGEES in a straggling group. First comes a young man carrying a heavy sack. He is followed by two women and a child, each carrying small bundles tied up in pieces of cloth. Next come two men, one carrying a rolled-up blanket across his shoulder, and the other a bundle, and supporting between them a feeble old woman. Behind them comes an irregular procession of women and their children. The man leading keeps hesitating and looking about as if fearful of the road. The other two men look sharply up at intervals. The women plod hopelessly on. The children cling fearfully to their skirts)*

FIRST CHILD *(Suddenly half crying)* Mother, I'm tired!

FIRST AND SECOND WOMEN *(Together)* Hush!

*(The old woman walks with increasing difficulty. Another child cries)*

OLD WOMAN (*As they reach stage center*) Leave me! Leave me here! I can go no farther.

(*The whole procession stops and the refugees cluster around the woman as she sinks to the ground*)

SECOND MAN: We cannot leave you here, mother! There are wandering bands of Kurds and Moslems everywhere.

THIRD MAN: You would surely be killed.

OLD WOMAN: What matter? Death comes soon or late to all of us by these wolves.

THIRD WOMAN: Courage, grandmother, courage! We will soon reach the American missionaries and be safe.

SECOND WOMAN: Their flag will protect us. They will feed us and give us shelter.

OLD WOMAN: Ah, but death is kinder! He will feed me and clothe me and shelter me, without money and without price; take all my pain away and give me rest. A-hah, yes! And does he not hold safe in his keeping my husband and all my children, murdered back there in our village?

FOURTH WOMAN: Hush, do not speak of those scenes!

FIRST MAN: Come, mother, let us lift you. There are not many miles yet to go.

(*Stealthily out of the shadows on either side creep the Moslem bandits, with their guns, five from stage R and four from stage L. They steal forward very slowly, their bodies half bent*)

OLD WOMAN: No, no! There is perhaps hope for you younger ones —hope until another day of massacre, but let me die by the will of heaven here.

FIRST WOMAN: Oh, we could not leave you by the roadside alone, and night fast coming on! Try but a little to walk!

SECOND MAN: Come, Joseph and I will carry you. We will throw away these bundles (*Laughing bitterly*). Of what use are household goods when one has no house?

FOURTH CHILD (*Pointing to Kurds' over on stage R*) Oh, mother,  
see that man!

FOURTH WOMAN (*Screaming*) The Kurds!

(*The first man wheels in his place, facing the KURDS on his side, while the two men with the old woman try to thrust her behind them, as they half step forward to protect the women and children. No one speaks after the FOURTH WOMAN's warning scream, even the children clinging speechlessly to their mothers. Slowly the KURDS, stage L, creep up unperceived by the refugees, whose attention is centered upon the bandits stage R. There is no sound for a moment*)

KURDISH CHIEF (*Stepping boldly out toward stage center and laughing harshly*) Christian dogs! So you escaped from the village, did you? And are carrying your wealth away with you, too? Ah, it is too heavy for your feeble hands. We will be kind and carry it for you! Here, men!

SECOND MAN (*Bitterly*) We are quite used to such kindness!

(*The bandits on stage R roughly tear the possessions of the refugees on their side from their hands and search them, while those on stage L steal up behind the three unconscious women and seize their bundles*)

SEVENTH KURD (*To FIFTH WOMAN*) Ah, my pretty! (*She shrinks violently away from him*)

KURDISH CHIEF: Pile the plunder over there, men (*Pointing to stage L, near wing*), and Ali and Mehmet you will open the bundles with me. We will see what these pigs have taken from us.

FIRST MAN (*Scornfully*) Taken from you! When did a Christian steal from a Moslem?

KURDISH CHIEF (*Threateningly*) Christian dog! Does not all that you possess rightfully belong to the sons of the Prophet! (*To men*) Bind him! And bind these other dogs, too. Sardar, you

will know what to do with them and with the women while I am busy. (*He withdraws with ALI and MEHMET to the pile of plunder*)

SEVENTH KURD (*Seizing the FIFTH WOMAN by the arm and dragging her forward toward SARDAR, who has stepped toward stage C to take command*) Here, Sardar, let us make Moslems of the women first!

THIRD MAN (*Struggling violently to free himself from his bonds*) She is my sister, master. You may shoot me, but leave her free!

SARDAR: We will shoot you, friend, quickly enough, and your brothers, too.

OLD WOMAN (*Hobbling forward and sinking to her knees before SARDAR*) Take me! Shoot me! Kill me in any way you please! You have killed my husband and all my children! Is not that enough? Spare these men a remnant—just three—out of our whole village! Just three! I am homesick for death!

SARDAR (*Laughing and pushing her roughly away*) Why should we kill you, old woman? We care not for you. Out of the way!  
(*Two of the KURDS, having tied the men prisoners together, begin to lead them off stage R*)

FIFTH WOMAN (*Starting forward*) My brother! Do not kill him!  
I will give you—

ALL YOUNG WOMEN (*Pressing forward*) Do not kill them—

FIRST WOMAN: They have done nothing.

FIFTH WOMAN: Some way we will get money for you—

SARDAR: Renounce your faith and we will spare the men!

SEVENTH KURD (*Standing over FIFTH WOMAN*) Say "Save Mohammed!" That is all. Say "Save" and I will spare your brother!

THIRD MAN: Do not say it, sister!

SECOND MAN: Do not deny Christ to save us!

SEVENTH KURD: Say but "Save"!

(*The woman stretches her arms dumbly toward her brother, while enter, stage R, the MISSIONARY and his WIFE*)

THIRD MAN: Never say it, sister! It is nothing to die!

FIRST MAN: If we save our souls for Christ's resurrection!

MISSIONARY (*Followed closely by his WIFE*) What is this?

ALL WOMEN (*Hysterically*) Sahib!

MISSIONARY: These are harmless village people. What are you doing to the men?

SARDAR: They are Christian dogs who stir up trouble!

MISSIONARY: But what have they done?

SARDAR (*Uncomfortably*) We have heard that they are plotting to kill all Moslems.

SECOND MAN: That is not true, Sahib!

FIRST MAN: We will swear that it is not!

THIRD MAN: You know our village, Sahib!

SECOND MAN: These men and their brothers have but yesterday robbed and burned our homes, and we three men only are left alive!

FIRST WOMAN: We were but going to your mission, Sahib, for we thought we would be safe in your compound.

(*The missionary's Wife has gone to the old woman, who seems to have fainted, and lifts her, ministering to her. Her face is turned from the audience*)

MISSIONARY: What evidence have you? Were they bearing arms when you met them?

SARDAR: We have not time to parley!

MISSIONARY: You are planning to rob and murder these poor, defenseless people in cold blood—

SARDAR: They are dogs of Christians!

MISSIONARY: I plead with you for mercy, as some day you yourselves will ask for mercy—and of me!

KURDISH CHIEF (*Coming up with men*) We, ask for mercy? Never! The Moslem army triumphs!

MISSIONARY'S WIFE (*Who has risen, as she hears the CHIEF's voice in the first part of his speech, and now stands looking at him*) Hasson, do you not know me? (*She pushes her veil back from her face*)

KURDISH CHIEF (*Starting in astonishment*) Khannan! Lady, it is you who saved my life when I was starving two years ago! And my son also! You found me. (*To the bandits*) Free the prisoners! (*The SEVENTH KURD raises his gun fiercely to strike them, HASSON seizes it and speaks between his teeth*) First must you kill me!

SARDAR (*Fiercely*) And will you let the women and the plunder slip?

ALL KURDS: Yes!

Ali (*Angrily*) Why have you led us?

KURDISH CHIEF: No, no! The plunder's yours. Go divide it. I give you my share. These dogs are not worth wasting your powder on! (*The KURDS wait for no further words, but fall upon the booty*) Say not, Lady, a Kurdish Chief's ungrateful, and come happier times. But go quickly (*He looks over his shoulder at his men*), quickly, friends! (*He goes off swiftly stage L, upstage exit, after his men, who carry the booty*)

FIRST MAN (*Softly and reverently*) Saved! Now thanks to God!

FIFTH WOMAN: Doctor, Lady, we' kiss your hands and your feet!  
*(She raises the hem of the missionary woman's dress to her lips!)*

MISSIONARY: Quick, men, help me put this woman on the horse.  
Bring the children, and all come quickly!  
*(They make exit stage R, down-stage exit, while the music of the Armenian song is again softly played.)*



## PART III

### OTHER PLAYS AND PAGEANTS

THE PILGRIM AND THE BOOK      THE CRUSADE OF THE CHILDREN  
DUST OF THE ROAD



# THE PILGRIM AND THE BOOK

A DRAMATIC SERVICE OF THE BIBLE

BY

PERCY MACKAYE

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## PREFACE

At the invitation of the AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY, through its General Secretaries, Dr. William I. Haven and Mr. Frank H. Mann, I have written this Dramatic Service, designed to be used in churches.

Being in some respects the first of its kind, the text is followed by certain Comments and Suggestions, which, it is hoped, may be of use to ministers, choirmasters, and teachers, in preparing to hold the Service with their own congregations, choirs, and Sunday schools.

The theme of the Service is the power of truth, as revealed in the Bible, to set free the human soul, in particular from the shackles of Persecution and the Fear of Death. This theme applies historically to the spiritual struggles and achievements of the Pilgrim Fathers, but also symbolically to Man himself as a pilgrim seeking "freedom to worship God."

The purpose and form of the Service are not, then, in any sense those of an historical pageant; they are rather those of a new (and very old) relationship between dramatic expression and religious aspiration, seeking to fuse these in a ritual of plastic simplicity, adaptable to all congregations, whether of meetings very small in chapels, clubs and schools, or of great gatherings in large churches and cathedrals.

Necessarily, the printed directions in the text must apply to a certain scale of participation, and here an average scale has been assumed; but this scale may be enlarged to one of much greater elaboration and color than here described, or be diminished to the very simplest essentials—even omitting the Groups and retaining only the Principals. These alone—provided they be interpreted with insight and sincerity—may carry by themselves the meanings of the Service, which indeed might be simply read loud by the minister together with members of the congregation (interwoven by singing of the hymns), in cases where full preparation is impracticable; though, of course, the results would not be equivalent.

To all ministers, or others, who may at any time prepare, or take part in, this Service, I shall be sincerely obliged if they will send me—at my address below—such records, programmes, or personal impressions of their holding of the Service as they may like to let me know about.

For its general use, the Music involved must needs be old and familiar; and so the ten Hymns (to four of which I have written new words for special requirements of the Actions) are tunes well known both to our time and to elder times. A single exception is that of the solo (sung by the Spirit of the Old Testament) in the Fourth Action, the music for which—to words by John Bunyan—is taken from the Shepherd-boy's Song in the oratorio of "The Pilgrim's Progress," composed by Edgar Stillman Kelley, to whom (and to Oliver Ditson, Boston, publisher of the Oratorio), I am heartily indebted for preparing a special edition of the Song, which can be secured direct from Oliver Ditson, or from any music dealer, for use in this Service. To Mr. Kelley also I am indebted for suggesting the use (for Hymn II) of the old tune, *China*, which he has utilized, as a musical theme, with rare impressiveness, in his "New England Symphony."

Of the "Persons in the Service," three only—the Pilgrim, Satanas, and Revelation—are expressed through dialogue, in rhymed verse, written by myself. The six others who speak—as spokesmen of the Book—utter the unaltered language of the Bible, selected and combined by me from those Scriptures attributed to the respective speakers in the Bible itself.

To the reader the whole is here submitted in published form, chiefly with the hope that it may be useful to him not simply as a reader but as a participant. For it is perhaps only to a participant, imbued with the imagination of true worship, that the immortal newness, wonder, and beauty of the ancient Word will appeal with that freshness of apprehension which it is the prime object of this Service to quicken.

PERCY MACKAYE.

Harvard Club, New York.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

For those who desire to perform this dramatic service, the edition published by the AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY, Astor Place, New York City, price 25 cents, contains full, printed comments and suggestions concerning

- I. SPIRIT OF PARTICIPATION.
- II. COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS.
  - 1. Of the Persons.
  - 2. Of the Groups.
  - 3. Making of Costumes.
  - 4. Colors and Symbols, Number and Sex.
- III. PROPERTIES FOR PERSONS AND GROUPS.
- IV. SETTING AND DIRECTORSHIP.
- V. LIGHTING.
- VI. MUSIC.
- VII. PROGRAMMES.
- VIII. WORDS AND MUSIC OF HYMNS.

No adequate rendering of the service can be given without careful attention to the above necessities of its performance.

## PERSONS AND GROUPS

### In the Service

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#### PERSONS

(Speaking)

THE PILGRIM                    MOSES

SATANAS                        DAVID

REVELATION                    ISAIAH

ANGEL OF THE STAR

ST. JOHN

ST. PAUL

(Chanting)

(Mute)

SPIRIT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT      PERSECUTION

SPIRIT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT      FEAR OF DEATH

#### GROUPS

(Singing)

LAWS                            SHEPHERDS

PSALMS                        DISCIPLES

PROPHETS                     APOSTLES

THE CONGREGATION

## THE PILGRIM AND THE BOOK

### PART I

#### PRELUDE

(“Freedom to Worship God”)

*When the congregation is assembled, the Service begins with the singing, by ALL THE PEOPLE, of Felicia Hemans’s familiar hymn “The Pilgrim Fathers.”*

#### HYMN I

*The breaking waves dashed high  
On a stern and rockbound coast,  
And the woods against a stormy sky  
Their giant branches toss’d;  
And the heavy night hung dark  
The hills and waters o'er,  
When a band of exiles moored their bark  
On the wild New England shore.*

*Not as the conqueror comes,  
They, the true-hearted, came;  
Not with the roll of stirring drums,  
And the trump that sings of fame;  
Not as the flying come,  
In silence and in fear,  
They shook the depths of the desert's gloom  
With their hymns of lofty cheer.*

*Amidst the storm they sang;  
The stars heard, and the sea!*

*And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang  
To the anthem of the free.*

*The ocean eagle soared  
From his nest by the white wave's foam,  
And the rocking pines of the forest roared:  
This was their welcome home!*

*What sought they thus afar?  
Bright jewels of the mine?  
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war?  
They sought a faith's pure shrine.  
Ay, call it holy ground,  
The soil where first they trod;  
They have left unstained what here they found:  
Freedom to worship God.*

#### FIRST ACTION

(The Pilgrim)

*As the strains of this Hymn are ceasing, a sturdy FIGURE enters the dimness of the left aisle at the back of the church.*

*All in gray, clad in wide hat and long heavy CLOAK over Pilgrim's garb, he bears in his right hand a heavy STAFF and under his left arm A GREAT BOOK, bound in old vellum, closed with an iron clasp.*

*With pace of quiet power he strides up the aisle toward the Pulpit, but stops midway as A DEEP VOICE calls softly from the obscurity.*

THE VOICE: Pilgrim!

(The FIGURE pauses to listen; the Call is repeated more loud.)

Pilgrim!

THE PILGRIM:

Who calleth from the dark?

(He moves forward again toward the Pulpit.)

THE VOICE: Pilgrim!—Pilgrim!—Whence have ye come hither?

THE PILGRIM:

From a far country: little was my bark  
Among the great billows; bitter blew the weather.

THE VOICE:

Why have ye come, forlorn and famine-shod?

THE PILGRIM:

I seek.—I seek.—

THE VOICE:

What seek ye here to find?

THE PILGRIM:

Freedom I seek: freedom to serve mankind;  
Freedom to worship God.

#### SECOND ACTION

(The One in Black)

*From shadow beyond the Pulpit, left, appears ONE IN BLACK, clad as a Pilgrim of the Middle Ages, in long robe and cowl. He approaches the PILGRIM IN GRAY, and speaks with the same voice that has been heard from the dark.*

THE ONE IN BLACK:

Ha, comrade! Little have ye changed, I vow,  
Since first we met.

THE PILGRIM:\*

God save thee, friend! But who art thou?

THE ONE IN BLACK:

I am another  
Who goes on pilgrimage  
In every clime and age  
Where you go faring. I am your twin brother—  
Do ye not know me?

\* Removing his hat at this speech, the PILGRIM lays it near the Pulpit, where it remains till he takes it again at the final recessional.

THE PILGRIM (*Astonished*) Nay.

THE ONE IN BLACK:

Can ye forget  
Our gracious garden, and that pleasant day  
What time we wore  
No cumbering weeds of drab and black, as now  
On this bleak shore,  
But all was endless May  
Under the green-and-golden apple bough?—  
Now ye remember!

THE PILGRIM (*Staring more close*)

Nay.

THE ONE IN BLACK:

Since then ye have wandered long and far away,  
And always I have trod upon your trail.—  
Once on your pilgrim shield  
You bore a Cross, to seek a shining grail;  
Once in a lonely field  
Ye labored, with bowed back,  
To bear uphill your heavy pilgrim's pack,  
While ever, before end of day,  
I overtook you.—Ye recall now?

THE PILGRIM (*Turning to move on*) Nay.

THE ONE IN BLACK:

Full soon ye shall. But stay—  
What stubborn device is this your right hand hath?

THE PILGRIM :

This is my Staff of Faith, to clear my path  
Of lurking fears.

THE ONE IN BLACK:

And, lo, this garb which forms  
Your staff so brave appurtenance?

THE PILGRIM :

This is my Cloak of Strength against the storms  
Of circumstance.

THE ONE IN BLACK :

Your pardon if I look:  
There in your left hand—what is yonder Book?

THE PILGRIM :

This is my Lantern in the starless night.

THE ONE IN BLACK :

Ye show a lantern, but where shines the light?

THE PILGRIM :

Inward it guides the way. Behind this clasp  
Beacons a double flame—the Old and New  
Both testifying Truth, and burning through  
Both—shineth Revelation.

THE ONE IN BLACK :

Let me grasp  
The Book, and break its hinge in two,  
And loose this hidden glory.

THE PILGRIM :

Nay,  
Here force can find no way,  
Nor cunning pick the lock:  
They first must knock  
To whom it shall be opened.

THE ONE IN BLACK :

Yield it, pray,  
To me, for well I know a knock shall shake it  
Asunder.—Yield me here the Book, I say,  
Else will I take it.

THE PILGRIM :

Not to thy threat I yield  
This holy Book, which many a year

I have in secret fended and concealed  
 From Persecution. Dear, more dear,  
 It still hath grown beneath all ban:  
 Yea, like a spring,  
 A living spring, its waters ran  
 Down through the Valley of the Shadow of Death,  
 Replenishing  
 Pools of life among the parchèd rocks,  
 Where, midst the lilies in the morning's breath,  
 The young bright Shepherd feeds his hallowed flocks.

*(While the PILGRIM has spoken, from the dimness right has appeared the form of A DARK ANGEL, with locks of gray, and stern, cold face, bearing in his hands a cord-like chain. Stealthily, at a gesture from the ONE IN BLACK, he approaches the PILGRIM from behind.)*

THE ONE IN BLACK:

Brother, ye have a misconceit  
 Imagining ye can outwit  
 The wiles of Persecution. Haply ye  
 Are most in jeopardy  
 Even now and here  
 When ye are least in fear.

THE PILGRIM:

How should that be?  
 For I have won now to a new-world shore,  
 And brunted tide and tempest shock,  
 To build upon this Book, as on a rock,  
 The Commonwealth of Freedom. So, no more  
 I dread old Persecution: let him stand  
 Before me now,—this staff of my right hand  
 Shall cope with him.

THE ONE IN BLACK:

The blind  
 Are they who see before, but not—*behind!*

## THIRD ACTION

## (Persecution)

*With sudden swiftness, the DARK ANGEL plucks from behind the PILGRIM's cloak and staff, and throws about him coils of the tightening chain.*

THE PILGRIM (*Cries out*)

Who plucks my cloak?—Ha, now! Who binds me close,  
And rapes my staff  
Away? What sudden ambush of my foes  
Am I now fallen in?

THE ONE IN BLACK (*Looks on, in deep laughter*)

Ah-ha-ha-ha!

THE PILGRIM (*Bewildered*)

And what art thou, to laugh  
Upon thy brother in his sore chagrin?

THE ONE IN BLACK:

Ha, verily! That ancient foe  
Ye feared no more—hath caught you in control;  
And ye who would so zealously bestow  
Freedom on a new world, now your own soul  
Itself—behold in bondage!

THE PILGRIM:

Yea, alack!

Old Persecution, is it thou  
Hast crept behind my back?  
Release me! For I dread lest my own brow  
Grow pitiless as thine.

THE ONE IN BLACK (*To PERSECUTION*)

Nay, bondman mine:  
Keep him still fast; and take  
Yon stick and tether him as to a stake,

Here kneeling down. So let him see  
Whether his Staff of Faith shall set him free.

(PERSECUTION obeys. Fixing the Staff upright in the floor, he binds against it—back to—the PILGRIM, who kneels with face toward the Pulpit, whence he turns his face right to speak to THE ONE IN BLACK.)

THE PILGRIM :

And art thou, then, my brother?

THE ONE IN BLACK :

Yea,

The pilgrim partner of your way,  
Who now that ye are well bestowed  
Will ease you of the load  
Of yonder Book.

THE PILGRIM :

No, no, not this! Take all  
Save this!

THE ONE IN BLACK :

And so ye may recall  
Your brother pilgrim by the brighter hue  
That erst ye knew—  
Behold!

(Flinging off his Cowl and Garb of Black, he stands smiling in long ROBE OF BRILLIANT RED, his locks of coppery gold bound with a shining Serpent. Staring, the PILGRIM murmurs aloud)

THE PILGRIM :

Satanas!

THE ONE IN BLACK :

Aye, and Ahriman,  
Asmodeus, Apollyon, Sammael,  
Lucifer,—by all these ye name me well!  
And now, by all my powers and conjuring names

Your holy Book would ban—'

Yield me the Book!

(*At his sign, PERSECUTION tears the Book from the PILGRIM, who utters a deep cry.*)

THE PILGRIM:

Dear God! Thou hast forsook  
Thy Pilgrim!

SATANAS (*To PERSECUTION*)

Go!—Go bear it to the flames!

Yet hold: bring here again.

(*He takes the Book himself and, standing aloft in the Pulpit, holds it tauntingly above the PILGRIM beneath.*)

Here, brother, lift your gaze;  
For, lo, this lantern of your starless night  
Now shall I break in twain,  
And let its double beacon blaze  
Full on your sight—  
And Revelation shine, to show  
In the Shadow of Death, by the parchèd rocks,  
Waters of life, where the lilies blow  
And the young bright Shepherd feeds his hallowed flocks.  
— Ah-ha! Behold now, brother!

THE PILGRIM:

Nay! Desecrate it not!

SATANAS (*Tearing the Book in two, holds upward the two halves.*)

Behold, your Ark of Light is void and smother  
And cloven darkness; yea, its holy vision  
Is even as a clot  
Of blindness, and its voice, a dumb derision  
Of all your cry and yearning to be free.

THE PILGRIM:

Ah me!  
Is there no testament of liberty  
My soul can cleave unto?

## SATANAS:

Nor Old, nor New  
 Can slake your soul's desire:  
 The soul itself is doubt and quenchless fire!  
 Yea, even as this volume, torn  
 In twain, 't is racked by inward feuds forlorn.  
 So, Pilgrim, pray alone to your own shames.  
 Farewell!—And thou,  
 Bondman, bear forth this Book before me now.  
 Pilgrim and Book are kindling for my flames!

(Following PERSECUTION, SATANAS departs at the center.)

## THE PILGRIM:

O God! Now am I fallen, and thy frown  
 Is over me. Now am I all alone—and down.

## FOURTH ACTION

(Revelation: the Old Testament)

*From beyond the Pulpit, at center, A GLOWING OF CANDLES begins to dawn, while clear the bird-sweet VOICE OF A BOY begins to choir in solo.*

## THE VOICE:

*He that is down need fear no fall,  
 He that is low, no pride;  
 He that is humble ever shall  
 Have God to be his guide.*

*(And now, at center, all in white, carrying a lighted candle, appears A RADIANT FORM, at right and left of whom two Choir-Boy CHERUBIM in blue bear in their hands Two OPEN BOOKS OF GOLD. While the Three come forward, the Boy on the right continues to sing:)*

*I am content with what I have,  
 Little it be or much;*

*And, Lord, contentment still I crave  
Because Thou savest such.*

*Fullness to them a burden is  
That go on pilgrimage:  
. Here little, and hereafter bliss,  
Is best from age to age.*

(*The Three pause above, in front of the PILGRIM, who gazes up at them.*)

THE PILGRIM :

O music, that dost heal the wounds of wrong!  
Spirit! Art thou a voice made visible,  
Or some meek vision melted into song?  
And thou, whose presence dawneth to fulfil  
My faith—what art thou?

THE RADIANT FORM :

Revelation.—I

Am here to set you free.

THE PILGRIM :

Whence rose thou here?

REVELATION :

Out of the Book, wherein I still do lie  
Ever to rise again, and banish fear  
From the downfallen.

THE PILGRIM :

But the Book was cast  
Into the fire.

REVELATION :

The fire was but a blast  
To waken me.

THE PILGRIM :

But he, Satanas, rent  
The holy Word in twain.

REVELATION :

The twain—behold !

Are risen even as I—each Testament  
By fire repurified to finer gold.

THE PILGRIM :

That golden music—didst thou breathe it through  
The soul of one of these ?

REVELATION :

These are the reeds

Of my eternal organ : the Old, the New,  
Both ever young in Faith, whose deepest creeds  
Have flower in childhood. These are Cherubim  
Who bring to set you free, with Word and Hymn,  
The Book whose truth is freedom. But the first  
To testify shall be the Old, whose voice  
Revealeth those of yore who knew the thirst  
Of Persecution's bondage, and made choice  
Against the Oppressor's chain, to succor law  
Of liberty—to objurgate the awe  
Of power—and purge the intimidated throng  
With psalmèd speech and sacraments of song.

THE PILGRIM :

So shall my chain be loosed, and I restored  
To freedom ?

REVELATION :

Yea ; but only if the Word  
Those testify be kindled in thy will  
To emulation. Therefore, Pilgrim, till  
The Three, whom I invoke, convene their Laws,  
Prophets, and Psalms, here to befriend thy cause,  
Kneel on, and pray, and quicken in thy heart  
Responsive choirs.—So will I depart  
Now with the New, and let the Old preside  
Over these rites, for which—the first to speak

In witness—I summon him who from the peak  
Of Sinai brought the Laws.

## FIFTH ACTION

(The Laws)

*While REVELATION and the SPIRIT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT withdraw at center, the SPIRIT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT—placing his Gold Volume open on the Pulpit—chants with Choir-Boy Voice.*

## THE OLD TESTAMENT:

Ye, who were the strength of my people  
In the wilderness,  
Ye Laws, and Moses who leadeth you,  
Succor now this Pilgrim!

*(Enter now, in procession, through the body of the church, blazoned by their distinctive Group-Symbol and Vestment, the Group of THE LAWS (ten in number), led by MOSES, who carries a Scroll. These come singing, and take their places\* during their Hymn, in which ALL THE PEOPLE join.)*

## HYMN II

(Sung by ALL, to the tune of *China*)

*Where Sinai's lonely shadow soared  
Through morning stars in choir,  
There from his stormy throne the Lord  
First spake to man in fire.*

\* The places of formation and massing, entrance and exit, as well as the distinctive symbols and vestments, of the several Groups in the Service are indicated in the Comments and Suggestions published in the American Bible Society's edition of this Pageant which those responsible for a production will wish to have.

*Long ages had his earth-born child  
Wandered to rob and kill;  
But now God spake, to guide the wild  
Digressions of his will.*

*God spake, and on his tablet sealed  
With sign of his First Cause  
Those great commandments which revealed  
The grandeur of his Laws.*

#### SIXTH ACTION

(The Psalms)

*At the expiration of this hymn, the SPIRIT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT chants again above the kneeling PILGRIM.*

#### THE OLD TESTAMENT:

Ye, who were the consolation of my sorrows  
In exile and pain,  
Ye Psalms, and David who leadeth you,  
Comfort here this Pilgrim!

*(Enter then in procession, with symbol and vestment,  
the Group of THE PSALMS, led by DAVID, who carries  
a Harp. These come singing, and take their places  
during their Hymn, in which the Others Assembled  
do not join.)*

#### HYMN III

(Sung by the *Group* of the PSALMS only, to the tune of *St. Anne*)

*Even as the hart panteth in thirst  
After the water brooks,  
So panteth after thee, O God,  
My soul—my thirsting soul.*

*My tears they call me, day and night:  
My soul, where is thy God?*

*Why art thou, O my soul, cast down?—  
His countenance shall shine.*

*Deep calleth unto deep, amid  
Noise of thy watersprouts,  
And all thy waves and billows are  
Gone over me, O Lord!*

*Yet shall thy lovingkindness be  
My rock in the daytime,  
And in the night thy song shall lift  
My prayer to thee, my life!*

#### SEVENTH ACTION

(The Prophets)

*On the conclusion of this Processional Hymn, the SPIRIT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT chants once more above the PILGRIM in prayer.*

#### THE OLD TESTAMENT:

Ye, who were trumpets of my aspiration  
In indignation and remorse,  
Ye Prophets, and Isaiah, who leadeth you,  
Rouse ye up this Pilgrim!

(Enter at these words, in procession, with symbol and vestment, the Group of the PROPHETS, led by ISAIAH, who carries a Staff. These come singing, and take their places during their Hymn, in which ALL THE PEOPLE join.)

#### HYMN IV

(Sung by ALL, to the tune of *Old Hundredth*)

*Our Lord, who clave the desert rock  
And made the waters forth to flow,  
He, by his spirit-rending shock,  
Doth cleave the soul of man also.*

*Our Lord, who tore the sultry void  
 With whirlwinds of his thunder-stone,  
 He cleanseth too our spirits cloyed—  
 He is our paean and our moan.*

*In desert rock there is a spring,  
 A tempest in the torpid air:  
 Our Lord revealeth everything;  
 His prophecies are everywhere.*

#### EIGHTH ACTION

(Moses, David, Isaiah)

*As this Hymn is ceasing, the PILGRIM lifts his head from its bowed posture of prayer. After a moment of silence, very low, the organ begins to play; and now, while it continues,\* the PILGRIM speaks.*

THE PILGRIM :

Ye, which are present in my prayer,  
 And compass me about with choirs  
 Of holy hymns, forbear  
 Awhile your ministry of song, and now  
 Quicken me with your living Word: yea, thou  
 Moses, that from the mountain fetched the fires  
 Of God to purge our bondage, succor me!—  
 How shall I cleanse my soul's captivity?

(Answering from his place in the body of the church,  
 among the LAWS, MOSES speaks to the PILGRIM.)

MOSSES :

Lo, it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and will rejoice over thee for good,

If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to

\* Through all the speeches which follow, till FEAR OF DEATH enters, the organ continues to play very softly.

keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the Law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?

Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?

But the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it.

THE PILGRIM :

Nay, is my help so nigh? Yet, in my heart  
I have denounced the forgers of my chains,  
And cursed their sore corrupting smart,  
And said—There is no succor for my pains!

(*From his place amid the Group of the PSALMS, the sweet, consoling voice of DAVID now speaks to the PILGRIM.*)

DAVID :

*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God:* They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good!

But fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity,

For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb;

But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God:*

But I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me and heard my cry;

He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry

clay, and set my foot upon a rock, and established my goings.  
And he hath put a new song in my mouth:

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me  
beside the still waters.*

*He restorcth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteous-  
ness for his name's sake.*

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff  
they comfort me.*

*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God:*

But the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world,  
and they that dwell therein;

The heavens declareth the glory of God; and the firmament  
sheweth his handiwork.

Therefore, rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous;

Praise ye the Lord!

Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, ye stars of light!

#### THE PILGRIM:

Yea, stars of light, and sun and moon,

They praise him with immortal lips,

O David; yet in night and noon

My soul still struggles with eclipse,

Half darkling in a torpid shroud,

Half shining free:

Ah, Wind of God! When wilt thou rend the cloud

That cumbereth me?

(*From his place among the PROPHETS, ISAIAH makes  
answer to the PILGRIM, in kindling tones.*)

#### ISAIAH:

*Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!*

Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall  
live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even  
the sure mercies of David.

Behold, I have given him as a witness to the people, a leader and commander of the people.

Even so the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

*Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!*

Where is the fury of the oppressor?

The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit.

But I am the Lord thy God, that divided the sea,

And I have put my words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand; I, even I, am he that comforteth you.

For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee;

The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed;

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater;

So shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void;

For ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

*Therefore, awake, awake, stand up, O captive!* Break forth into joy, for the Lord hath comforted his own!

*(At these words, ALL THE PEOPLE break forth into singing, during which ISAIAH, DAVID, and MOSES approach the place of the PILGRIM, where ISAIAH looses the Chain which binds him to the stake, and he rises*

*in their midst to his feet. There MOSES restores to him his Cloak, and DAVID his Staff.)*

### HYMN V

(Sung by ALL, to the tune of Handel's *Christmas*)

*Awake, my soul; stretch every nerve  
And press with vigor on:  
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,  
And an immortal crown.*

*A cloud of witnesses around  
Hold thee in full survey:  
Forget the steps already trod,  
And onward urge thy way.*

### PART II

#### NINTH ACTION

(The Shackles Loosed)

*As the Music ceases, the PILGRIM, standing amid the Spokesmen of the Book, speaks again.*

#### THE PILGRIM :

Now are my shackles loosed, O gracious Lord!  
Now am I free again and strong.  
And ye, dear elder brothers of the Book,  
Prophets of Law, and Righteousness, and Song,  
I give you thanks, who have restored  
My cloak and staff, and took  
My chain away.  
Henceforward, come what may,  
Now can I go my path alone  
And have no fear of life.

(As MOSES, DAVID, and ISAIAH are returning to their places,\* the voice of SATANAS is heard calling low—this time from the shadow on the right beyond the Pulpit.)

THE VOICE:

Pilgrim!

THE PILGRIM:

What tone

Echoes once more from some dark place of dread  
Concealed?

THE VOICE: Pilgrim!

THE PILGRIM: Ha, now I know thy voice!  
From whence now dost thou call me?

THE VOICE:

From the dead.

THE PILGRIM:

The dead!

(Startled, the PILGRIM draws slightly back. While he hesitates to answer, he is approached, left, from behind, by a DARK ANGEL with locks of white, who carries a BAND OF BLACK CLOTH. The PILGRIM speaks toward the right):

I will not go that path.

THE VOICE:

Ye have no choice.

There is no way that leads not to the wrath  
To come.

THE PILGRIM:

My staff it is restored: I see  
My goal, and have no fear.

THE VOICE:

Of life!—But what of death?

\* Here the organ begins again very softly to play, continuing till it swells to a crescendo at the burst of radiant light and reappearance of REVELATION.

## TENTH ACTION

(Fear of Death)

*Sudden, from behind, the DARK ANGEL blindfolds the PILGRIM, who drops his staff with a cry of dismay.*

THE PILGRIM :

Ah me!

Lo, I am overtaken here  
By Fear of Death.—Now is there none shall free  
My vision to behold the light again?

SATANAS (*Appearing, from the right, in front of the blindfolded PILGRIM*)

Nay, evermore shall ye be shut within  
The dark of your own soul, to share with Sin  
A charnel of the blind, and grope in vain  
To escape the creeping hand of Death, his clutch  
About thy heart. Lo, now  
His fever-breath is on thy brow,  
And on thy hand—his icy finger-touch!

(*Reaching, with pointed fingers, SATANAS touches the hand of the PILGRIM, who draws it back with a faint scream.*)

THE PILGRIM :

Ah, Lord, my shepherd! Death himself is nigh:  
Now, Revelation, save me—or I die!

(*Swaying, he falls prone before the Pulpit. There SATANAS, lifting his own cast Garment of Black, lays it over the PILGRIM's body, wholly concealing him.*)

SATANAS :

Yea, many times before your death shall ye  
Die in imagination, where ye lie  
Now swooning.

(*To the DARK ANGEL*)

Fear of Death, right faithfully  
 Thou hast performed thy mission. Guard him well  
 When he shall waken.

## ELEVENTH ACTION

(Revelation: the New Testament)

*Above SATANAS, a sudden BURST OF RADIANCE illuminates the Pulpit, where REVELATION reappears with the SPIRIT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, and speaks.*

REVELATION:

Nay, depart!—and dwell  
 Far from this place of sanctity.

(*The SPIRIT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT has placed his Gold Volume beside the other, and now—while he sings—INVISIBLE CHOIRS join him, with shrill, clear Voices, in repetition of the Sanctus.*)

THE NEW TESTAMENT (*With UNSEEN CHOIRS*)

Holy! Holy! Holy!

SATANAS (*Starts back, overwhelmed by the SHINING LIGHT and the VOICES; then rushes off, with a great cry*)

Fly, Fear of Death! I follow thee.

(They disappear left.)

REVELATION:

My Pilgrim, I have heard your cry.  
 Your soul builds its own tomb, where only I  
 Can reach you, prisoned there. But now I bring  
 A new voice of the Word, whose summoning  
 Shall call a Star of Light,  
 Which simple Shepherds in the night  
 And fond Disciples and Apostles follow  
 To testify their faith;  
 And these—to banish Fear of Death

For aye, and raise this grave-shroud, which doth swallow  
 Your soul in night—now shall appear  
 And pierce your blindness, and be present here.

## TWELFTH ACTION

(The Shepherds)

*As REVELATION withdraws now, behind at the center, the SPIRIT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT enters the Pulpit and chants with Choir-Boy Voice.*

## THE NEW TESTAMENT:

Come unto this Pilgrim,  
 Ye, who first were beholders of my Revelation,—  
 Shepherds, and thou that leadest them, O Star:  
 Yea, bring him your light!

*(Enter then in procession, through the body of the church, the Group of SHEPHERDS, led by the ANGEL OF THE STAR, who wears on his brow a Fillet with a Burning Star. These come singing, and take their places during their Hymn, in which the Others Assembled do not join.)*

## HYMN VI

(Sung by the Group of SHEPHERDS only, to the tune of *Winchester Old*)

*While Shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
 All seated on the ground,  
 The Angel of the Lord came down,  
 And glory shone around.*

*“Fear not,” said he, for mighty dread  
 Had seized their troubled mind;  
 “Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
 To you and all mankind.*

*"To you in David's town this day  
Is born of David's line  
The Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;  
And this shall be the sign:*

*"The heavenly Babe you there shall find  
To human view displayed,  
All meanly wrapt in swathing bands,  
And in a manger laid."*

*Thus spake the Seraph; and forthwith  
Appeared a shining throng  
Of angels, praising God, who thus  
Addressed their joyful song:*

*"All glory be to God on high,  
And to the earth be peace;  
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men  
Begin and never cease!"*

#### THIRTEENTH ACTION

(The Disciples)

*On the conclusion of this Hymn, the SPIRIT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT chants again above the Black Pall.*

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT:

Come unto this Pilgrim,  
Ye, who first were followers of my Revelation,—  
Disciples, and thou who leadest them, St. John:  
Yea, bring him your love!

*(Enter then in procession, with their distinctive symbol and vestment, the Group of the twelve DISCIPLES, led by ST. JOHN, who wears a Fillet with Dove-Wings. These come singing, and take their places during their Hymn, in which ALL THE PEOPLE join.)*

*HYMN VII*(Sung by ALL, to the tune of *Nicaea*)

*Holy, holy, holy, Lord, thy disciples  
 Gather in devotion to sing and dream of thee:  
 Holy, holy, holy, beautiful and gracious,  
 Still in our hearts we dwell in Galilee.*

*Holy, holy, holy, still in the morning  
 Mending of our fisher nets, we hail thee by the shore;  
 Friend and guide and brother, by the wells of evening  
 Deep from thy voice we drink thy healing lore.*

*Holy, holy, holy, Lord, thy disciples  
 Ever through the ages live again because of thee:  
 Holy, holy, holy, all thy ways we follow,  
 From Bethlehem to dark Gethsemane.*

## FOURTEENTH ACTION

(The Apostles)

*As this Hymn concludes, the SPIRIT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT  
 chants once more above the prone form of the PILGRIM, with  
 Choir-Boy Voice*

## THE NEW TESTAMENT:

Come unto this Pilgrim,  
 Ye, who have spread the gospel of my Revelation,—  
 Apostles, and thou who leadest them, St. Paul:  
 Yea, bring him life eternal!

(Enter now in procession, with symbol and vestment,  
 the Group of the APOSTLES, led by ST. PAUL, who  
 wears a Fillet with a Cross. These come singing, and  
 take their places during their Hymn, in which ALL  
 THE PEOPLE join.)

*HYMN VIII*(Sung by All, to the tune of *Coronation*)

*All hail the power of Jesus' name;  
 Let angels prostrate fall;  
 Bring forth the royal diadem,  
 And crown him Lord of all.*

*Let every kindred, every tribe,  
 On this terrestrial ball,  
 To him all majesty ascribe,  
 And crown him Lord of all.*

*Oh that, with yonder sacred throng,  
 We at his feet may fall,  
 And join the everlasting song,  
 And crown him Lord of all!*

## FIFTEENTH ACTION

(The Star, St. John, St. Paul)

*To all the assembled Groups and Congregation, now—when this Hymn has ended—enters once more REVELATION, who speaks from above, in the Pulpit.*

## REVELATION:

Shepherds, Disciples, and Apostles, ye  
 Who come to join your shining company  
 Unto the Laws and Prophets and the Psalms  
 Of old, bestow ye now the healing balms  
 Of your New Testament  
 Upon this Pilgrim, pent  
 In yonder shroud of dark adversity.

(*As REVELATION withdraws at the center, the SPIRIT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT approaching, below, the*

*covered form of the PILGRIM—stands beside it and chants with choirng voice.)*

THE NEW TESTAMENT:

Now under his black pall  
The Pilgrim hearkeneth  
The tidings of the Angel of the Star.

THE ANGEL OF THE STAR (*Speaks from his place, in the body of the church, amid the SHEPHERDS.*)

Now in the days of Herod the King, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him. And when Herod the King had heard it, he learned of them carefully what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and they went their way; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshiped him.

*(The form of the PILGRIM stirs, and partly rises underneath his Dark Cloth, while the ANGEL continues without pause)*

Then took they down from the cross the body of Jesus, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden Joseph's new sepulchre hewn out of rock wherein was never man yet laid. There they laid Jesus, and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre.

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, came unto the sepulchre; and they were saying, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? for it was exceeding great; and looking up they saw that the stone was rolled back. And entering, they saw a young man arrayed in a white robe: And he saith unto them, Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who hath

been crucified : he is risen : he is not here : Why seek ye the living among the dead ?

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and ran to bring this word to the disciples.

(*As the ANGEL concludes, the SPIRIT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT draws back the Dark Shroud, revealing there the blindfold PILGRIM having risen to a kneeling posture, from which he cries out, with upclasped hands*)

#### THE PILGRIM :

A voice ! A voice of light ! I heard  
A shining and a healing Word.—  
Whence came that Light ? Whence rose that Word ?

#### ST. JOHN (*Speaks from his place among the DISCIPLES.*)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In him was Life ; and the Life was the Light of men. And the Light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness overcame it not.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth ; for the law was given through Moses ; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

And then it came to pass, as Jesus was teaching the people, that they were all astonished at his teaching ; for his word was with authority. And they said, Whence hath this man this wisdom ?

Jesus therefore answered them and said :

The words that I speak unto you I speak not from myself ; but the Father abiding in me doeth his works. The word therefore which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

If ye abide in my Word, then are ye truly my disciples ; and ye shall know the truth ; and the truth shall make you free.

In the world ye have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world.

For I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath eternal life.

Wherefore,

Awake, thou that sleepest,  
And arise from the dead,  
And Christ shall give thee light.

**THE PILGRIM** (*Rising to his feet above the Black Garment, speaks aloud.*)

Behold, I am awakened, and once more  
I rise, seeking the light:  
But what immortal breath  
Shall thaw this freezing band before my sight,  
Which Fear of Death  
Hath bound my brows withal?  
Yea, I who erst was thrall  
To Persecution, now to Fear, what new  
Commandment of the Word can liberate  
Fear unto faith, and guide my spirit through  
The awful gate?

**ST. PAUL** (*Answers from his place among Apostles*)

Lo, my beloved, bless them that persecute you; yea, bless, and curse not;  
For all the commandments are summed up in this word, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.  
For though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.  
And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Love suffereth long, and is kind ; love envieth not ; love vaunted not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

We are ambassadors, therefore, on behalf of Christ ; for in Christ Jesus naught availeth anything save faithful work through love. So, beloved, ye were called for freedom, for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty ; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Behold, I shew you a mystery.

For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?

(*As ST. PAUL concludes, All the Assembled Groups and the CONGREGATION break forth into singing. During their Hymn, the ANGEL OF THE STAR, ST. JOHN, and ST. PAUL gather beside the PILGRIM, where the ANGEL OF THE STAR removes the blindfolding Band from his eyes,\* while the other two restore his Staff and Cloak.*)

\* The black band is handed by the ANGEL to the SPIRIT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, who—with the SPIRIT OF THE OLD, carrying the cord-like chain—retires at center, where soon both are to reappear.

*HYMN IX*(Sung by ALL, to the tune of *Amsterdam*)

*Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,  
 Thy better portion trace;  
 Rise from transitory things  
 Toward heaven, thy destined place.  
 Sun and moon and stars decay,  
 Time shall soon this earth remove;  
 Rise, my soul, and haste away  
 To seats prepared above!*

## SIXTEENTH ACTION

(The Commonwealth of Man)

*Turning to the assembled GROUPS and their LEADERS, the PILGRIM speaks to them.*

THE PILGRIM :

O deathless beings of the Book,  
 By grace of you  
 My eyes are opened now, to look  
 On things unseen and view  
 My land of promise—Freedom: Here,  
 Where Persecution is not, nor the Fear  
 Of Death, but in the eyes  
 Of Revelation and your Prophecies  
 My cup of life is filled  
 With love and incorruption, here I scan  
 The peaks of my New World; here I will build—  
 As on a timeless rock—my Commonwealth of Man.

REVELATION (*Reappearing, above*)

This Rock of Ages be thy cornerstone!—  
 Behold!

(*From the Pulpit—where' the two gold volumes are no longer visible—REVELATION raises up the Old Vellum Book of the PILGRIM, now untorn as at first, and gives it to the ANGEL OF THE STAR, who bears it to the PILGRIM.*)

THE PILGRIM (*Cries out in gladness, as he takes it.*)  
The Book!

REVELATION :

Unharmed, and still thine own!

THE PILGRIM :

Yea, this shall be my Pilgrim's Rock: on this  
Will I found deep the human destinies  
Of that dear earthly kingdom which is one  
With Christ's in heaven. Not distant and alone,  
But here and now, with all my fellowmen,  
I will set forth again  
To cherish what, long seeking, now I find:  
Freedom to worship God—through my own kind.

REVELATION :

Still in the shadow lingereth one behind.—  
That old Satanas, who bereft thee, lo,  
Now where he cometh, slow  
And blindfold here, between my Cherubim:  
Enmeshed in his own chain, they master him.

(*Where REVELATION withdraws now, at center, SATANAS is brought forward, led in leash with the cord-like chain, held by the CHILD-SPIRITS OF THE NEW AND OLD TESTAMENTS. Over his eyes and coppery-gold hair is bound the Band of Black. Pausing a moment, with brow lifted, he moans aloud, with deep cry.*)

SATANAS :

*Yah—veh! Yah—veh! At last Thou leashest me!*

THE PILGRIM (*Gripping his Book and Staff*)

At last, dear Lord, thou leadest thy Pilgrim—free!

## SEVENTEENTH ACTION

(The "Firm Foundation")

*At these words of the PILGRIM, ALL THOSE ASSEMBLED break into Song, which continues while the GROUPS and their LEADERS—with their varied symbols and vestments—withdraw through the church aisles with the PILGRIM, followed by the Two CHERUBIM, leading SATANAS captive and blindfold, in march to the final HYMN RECESSIONAL.*

## HYMN X

(Sung by ALL, to the tune of *Portuguese Hymn*)

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath said,  
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?*

*Fear not, I am with thee; oh, be not dismayed!  
I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand  
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.*

FINIS

# THE CRUSADE OF THE CHILDREN \*

BY

ELISABETH WOODBRIDGE

\* Published by The Century Co., New York City, \$1.50. All recital rights belong to Miss Katherine Jewell Everts, 210 Prospect Street, New Haven, Conn., to whom all applications for public reading should be made.

## CHARACTERS

STEPHEN OF CLOYES.

MARCEL  
GUILBERT  
CHARLES  
JACQUES  
JEAN  
HENRI  
YVETTE  
CLAIRE  
FRANÇOIS

} *Children of Cloyes.*

BERNARDIN, *wealthy merchant, living near Cloyes.*

FLORETTE, *his young daughter.*

GASPARD, *her lover, a young crusader, who has been to Palestine.*

MARIE, *an old woman of Cloyes.*

URSULA, *a young woman of Cloyes.*

AN OLD MAN OF CLOYES.

TWO MERCHANTS.

COLETTE, *a lame girl.*

HER GRANDMOTHER.

PIERRE,

JEANETTE, and several other children  
(as many as the setting permits),

} *Children from Grandcourt.*

Another group of children from Bonneval.

A PRIEST OF ST. DENYS.

PRIESTS *in the procession of the Black Cross.*

TWO CITIZENS of Marseilles.

TWO MOTHERS of Marseilles.

THEIR TWO CHILDREN (very little ones).

AN OLD BEGGAR.

A YOUNG BEGGAR.

A LEPER.

Any number of additional children, even into the hundreds if the setting permits, may be used in the processional and recessional at the close of the last act.

## THE CRUSADE OF THE CHILDREN

### ACT I. CLOYES.

*A green meadow just outside the village. Behind it the land sweeps upward towards a background of deep woods.*

*A band of children enters, carrying staves, some with bright pennons waving from their tips. One or two of the boys carry little wooden shields. The smallest boy, MARCEL, darts ahead, waving a pennon and shouting back to the others.*

MARCEL: On to Jerusalem! Death to the Saracens!

GUILBERT (*A big boy, heavily built and rough of speech*)

“On to Jerusalem”! Thou! Thou grasshopper!

Hop away, now, and grow! The Holy City

Will not be saved by grasshoppers.

MARCEL: Maybe not,

But maybe it will not be saved by giants,

Neither,—there was the great Count Guidebert—

I saw him once, when I was little—

GUILBERT: Little!

When thou wast little! Littler than now?

I marvel much thy mother hath not lost thee

In a crack of her butter churn.

YVETTE (*One of the taller girls. She is holding by the hand CLAIRE, a very little girl*)

Be quiet, Guilbert!

Thy tongue will bring thee a bad end—but, Marcel,

Didst truly see the Count?

MARCEL: Truly, Yvette,

He was riding by along this very road.

They said he was riding off to Palestine.

My mother held me up to see.

YVETTE: How looked he?

MARCEL:

Big—big as a tower! \*[I called to him,  
He waved a hand to me—such a big hand!  
My mother whispered, “Call thou out to him,  
And say, ‘The Saints defend thee!’”

YVETTE: Well—and didst thou?

MARCEL:

Aye, but he heard not—and the mother whispered,  
“Call louder,” and I did, and then he heard,  
And laughed.

YVETTE: And said he aught?

MARCEL: I heard it not,

For when he laughed I hid against my mother—  
I was a little boy then—but she told me,  
He said, “The saints defend thee too, my boy,  
When thou goes in thy turn.”] I mean to go  
When I am big—

GUILBERT: That will be never.

YVETTE: He

Will go when he is a man, then, big or little.  
Lead us against the Saracens, Marcel!  
Lead a crusade!

MARCEL:

But who ’ll be Saracens?  
Guilbert and Charles and Jacques be Saracens.

GUILBERT:

Nay then i’ faith, we ’ll not be Saracens.  
We be good Christians all, and we will fight  
As Christian knights, to win the Holy Land.  
You may be Saracens—thou, and Yvette—

MARCEL:

Nay, but I could not be a Saracen  
Even in sport.

\* The text enclosed in brackets is usually omitted in playing, especially if given out-of-doors.

YVETTE:

Come, then, let Guilbert here  
And his men play that ye be Saracens  
And they be Christians—and, Marcel and Jean  
And Henri,—play that *they* be Saracens  
And *ye* be Christians.

GUILBERT:

[Yvette must stay at home,  
For women go not to the Holy Land.]

YVETTE:

Women? Women go not? Nay then, tell me,  
Did not the Count's own Lady go with him?  
The poor Count came not back, his head was cracked  
With a heathen sword—may Heaven rest his soul!  
But she returned, with the young countess, born  
There in the Holy Land. Francis the monk  
Himself christened the babe with holy water  
Of Palestine.]

MARCEL (*Raising his pennon*)

On to Jerusalem!

GUILBERT (*Raising his*)

On to Jerusalem! Kill the Heathen devils!

Kill them! And plant the cross in the Holy City!

(*The children fight, imitating as well as they can Knights on horseback. GUILBERT is tripped up by little MARCEL. Laughter and shouts arise from both sides, and in the midst of it MARIE and URSULA enter, followed by an old man.*)

MARIE:

Let be! Give over! Jacques! Here with that stick!

URSULA:

Yvette! Thou at this rough boys' deviltry!

MARIE:

Do ye not know that this is Black Cross Day,  
The day the church hath set apart, to mourn  
And fast and pray, because the Holy Land

Is ridden still by the black Saracens?  
The priests will have all quiet now, and seemly,  
For the procession.

GUILBERT:

Know it? Why should we not  
Know it? We've eaten nothing yet to-day;  
Our mothers would not give us even a crust  
Till the procession and the mass be over.

MARIE:

So much the better. Can we hope to kill  
The Saracens, if we eat before the Mass?  
And on a Black Cross Day?

URSULA:

I knew a lad.

Who ate before the Mass—his tongue turned black  
And swollen in his mouth—

(GASPARD, *a young knight, rides in on horseback from the left.*)

GASPARD:

Good Morrow, friends!

Tell me, hath the procession passed this way?

YVETTE:

Nay, my lord Gaspard.

GASPARD:

And have any folk  
Come hither, from the house of Bernardin,  
Above there?

YVETTE:

Nay, my lord, we village children  
Have seen none.

GASPARD:

Thanks!

(*He wheels his horse and goes out. From the hill path at the rear FLORETTE is seen approaching. She comes quickly, but furtively, pausing to look back, as though she expected to be followed.*)

FLORETTE:

Good Morrow, friends! Hath the procession passed?  
Am I too late?

YVETTE:

Nay, Florette, 't is early.

We are waiting for them now.

URSULA:

My little lady,

The young lord Gaspard rode up here but now.

He looked as he were bound to thy father's house.

FLORETTE:

He is welcome, truly, to my father's house,  
But I would fain stay here. I slipped away,  
Yvette—my father thinks me at my prayers  
Still, in the little chapel—may our Lady  
Forgive me the deceit—but I must needs  
See the procession, [and my nurse Ulrica  
Vowed that she would not come. She said the road  
Was steep for her poor old knees—my knees are sound  
But yet she would not let me come alone,  
And] so I ran away—hide me, Yvette!

OLD MAN:

Who is the maid, Marie?

Mine eyes can tell me nothing any more.

MARIE:

Hush! 't is Florette, the merchant's little daughter.  
They do say, the young Gaspard who was here  
Shall marry her.

OLD MAN:

Old Bernardin's Florette?

[She will be still a child; this maid is tall,  
That much I can see—sure, Marie, thine eyes  
Be worse than mine.

MARIE:

Well, tall or no, 't is she.

But she hath shot up fast of late—they grow  
Like weeds, these maids—'t was fourteen year ago  
Last Eastertide, I went to the great house there  
To lay out her dead mother—young she was—  
Scarce any older than her daughter here,  
But she was dead, for all her husband's moneys,

The cushions and the hangings and the rugs,  
And this one here, a little new-born babe,  
Like to die too—a tiny thing, all wrapped  
In finest wools and silks, brought by the merchant,  
They said, from Eastern lands, beyond the sea,  
Even beyond Jerusalem.

OLD MAN:                          Fourteen!]

'Tis young to marry, but a maid without  
A mother needs a husband.

GUILBERT:                          Holy Saints!

Will the procession never come? I am starved!

YVETTE:

Guilbert! For shame! Canst thou not fast three hours  
For the good of thy soul, and of the Holy City?

GUILBERT:

My soul would fare the better if I had  
A crust to munch on—and the Holy City  
Cares not at all whether I eat or no.

(CLAIRES *whispers to YVETTE.*)

YVETTE:

Listen to little Claire. She says the mother  
Told her, when all the children in the world  
Are good, the Holy City shall be ours.  
Darling! If all the children in the world  
Were but like thee, there would be no more wars,  
Christian and Saracen would live at peace  
There in the land where the White Christ once walked.

(*On the hillside in the background the figure of STEPHEN is seen silhouetted against the sky. He is shading his eyes with his hand, looking off and up. He moves down toward the children very slowly and without noticing them.*)

GUILBERT:

Look you, there comes Stephen, the lazy shepherd.  
They say he loses one sheep every week,  
And two in winter. There's a shepherd for you!

YVETTE:

Be quiet, Guilbert! See! He is looking off,  
He is watching something—are they coming, Stephen?

STEPHEN:

I see them not, and yet, but now, I thought  
I heard them chanting—listen!

GUILBERT:

I hear nothing.

(CLAIRe has run back to STEPHEN. She leans confidently against him, and listens, looking up into his face.)

STEPHEN:

Little one, dost thou hear them?

(The child nods, rapt, still looking up at him.)

GUILBERT:

Trust her not.

She can hear bird songs where none are, and yet  
She cannot hear us when we call her.

STEPHEN:

Child,

Thine ears must be like mine.

FLORETTE:

And like mine too.

Ulrica grows so angry with me when  
I do not answer, yet she cannot hear  
The fairy horns at twilight. Hast thou heard  
Them, little one? No, thou art fast asleep.  
What is it?

(CLAIRe whispers. FLORETTE laughs softly)

. . . In thy dreams?

She says she hears the fairies in her dreams.

Watch her, Yvette, or she 'll be stol'n away!

YVETTE:

(A distant sound of chanting is heard. It comes nearer. The children run back to look off, then return and group themselves, quiet and expectant. STEPHEN stands on a little hillock at one side. FLORETTE, YVETTE and CLAIRe stand together.

From the right enters the Procession of the Black Cross, a line of black-clad priests bearing a tall black

*cross. All the onlookers kneel and cross themselves. The priests pass slowly across the scene, chanting, and go off towards the village. Most of the children fall in quietly behind them. URSLA, MARIE and the OLD MAN follow more slowly. From the direction of the village a bell is heard tolling. STEPHEN still kneels, motionless. FLORETTE, YVETTE and CLAIRE rise and pause, looking back at him.)*

YVETTE (*Gently*)

Wilt thou come, Stephen? They have gone to Mass.

(*To CLAIRE*)

Come, little one. The priests will pray for us,—

Pray for the Holy City, that it be

Saved from the Saracens.

STEPHEN (*Rising*)

The time may come

When we shall more than pray—

YVETTE:

Pray,—and be good—

As little Claire hath said.

STEPHEN:

Pray, and be good,

Truly, for it is not the strength of men

Shall save the holy place. And, it may be,

A little child shall lead them.

YVETTE (*Smiling down at CLAIRE*) Canst thou lead us?

CLAIRE: I know the way to church.

STEPHEN:

'T is far enough

For us to-day. Some day we may go farther.

(*CLAIRE, proud to be leading, goes out first, looking back at them to be sure they are following. YVETTE follows her, smiling. FLORETTE, too, follows, slowly and dreamily. STEPHEN stands alone a moment, then goes after the others. The bell continues to toll. After a long pause, the chanting is resumed, and the Procession of the Black Cross returns, passes across the hillside and disappears. As the chant dies away in the distance, little CLAIRE runs in, looks about, and*

*turns back, calling to Florette, who is following slowly.)*

CLAIRE:

No, there is no one here at all, Florette,  
No one, not even a sheep.

FLORETTE (*Smiling*) I do not mind  
Sheep, little Claire.

CLAIRE: Shall I show you where I live?

We shall have little cakes to-day—with crosses,  
Black crosses on them, burnt on with the iron.

FLORETTE:

No, dear, I am not hungry.

CLAIRE: Is it wrong

To be hungry? Is it wrong to eat little cakes?  
Would the black Saracens be driven out  
If we did not eat little cakes?

FLORETTE (*Coming to herself a little and stooping to throw her arms about the child*)

No, Claire!

No, dear! You must eat many little cakes!  
You must grow big and strong and then we 'll go  
Together, and drive out the Saracens—  
Out of that land.

CLAIRE: [What didst thou see, Florette?  
There in the church, when thou didst look so long  
Up at the window?

FLORETTE: See? What did I see?  
Why, nothing, Claire, nothing but light. It seemed  
As though each moment I should see, should hear—  
Something—I knew not what—and I was waiting.  
It was as when the fairy bugles sound  
At twilight—ah, thou knowest, little Claire—  
A long way off—so dim they sound—so faint—  
One hardly knows if it is not the wind  
Stirring the trees—and one is still, and listens,

And waits—and waits—and listens. Claire, I know  
Not how it is, of late I seem to be  
Listening and waiting always—listening  
For something that I almost, almost hear;  
Waiting for something that I almost see—  
And yet, it never comes—it never comes!]

(*Down the hill from the left STEPHEN enters, walking as though in a dream. He wanders along the hillside, and stands as though listening. CLAIRE draws down FLORETTE and whispers, pointing at STEPHEN. FLORETTE smiles, turns and studies him. From the left, also, comes YVETTE, walking, as always, quickly and lightly. She looks first at FLORETTE and CLAIRE, then at STEPHEN, and laughs.*)

YVETTE:

Run, Claire, run, and take his hand, and ask  
What he is seeing—is it sheep, or ghosts?

(*CLAIRe starts to run, hesitates, runs on and takes his hand. She whispers up at him, and he bends to her, smiling dreamily. Then he straightens up again, and speaks, very slowly.*)

STEPHEN:

Sheep, or ghosts? Ghosts, little one—ghosts!

(*CLAIRe stares up at him, then follows his eyes. Suddenly she turns, runs to YVETTE, and buries her head in her skirt. YVETTE, throwing an arm about her, turns to STEPHEN in mock anger.*)

YVETTE:

Ghosts indeed! Ghosts of thine own stray sheep!  
Claire, 'tis the ghosts of all the sheep he's lost  
Come trotting back to bleat and wag their tails  
And call him a bad shepherd, as he is.  
Come, Claire, and pull thy scared head out of hiding  
And we'll trot home. The little cakes will burn,  
And I not there, and thou not there to eat them.

Run, or I'll catch thee!

(*She runs off, chasing CLAIRE, and FLORETTE and STEPHEN are left alone. FLORETTE gazes at STEPHEN, and follows the direction of his gaze, searching for what he seems to see. She looks at him again, puzzled and fascinated. She hesitates, then speaks.*)

FLORETTE:

Ghosts? Dost thou see them, truly?

STEPHEN:

Truly—aye—

Armies of them—such gallant ghosts—but weary—

FLORETTE:

Gallant—and weary! Stephen, these be not  
The ghosts Ulrica tells of—hers do naught  
But float about near graves in unblessed ground,  
At night,—one does not see them in the day.

STEPHEN:

These ghosts care not for daylight or for dark,  
They care but for one thing—one thing—

FLORETTE:

What thing?

STEPHEN:

For peace on earth—the peace of the White Christ!

FLORETTE:

For that we all care—ghosts or living folk.

STEPHEN:

These ghosts be living—

FLORETTE:

Living?

STEPHEN:

Not as we,

Yet living, and they work for peace.

FLORETTE:

Ah, then

They work even as our own Crusaders work!

Be these the ghosts of dead Crusaders?

STEPHEN:

Nay,

Their way is not the Crusaders' way—they bear  
The cross and not the sword.

FLORETTE:

Our knights bear both.

STEPHEN :

Christ bore but one, and the wounds of the sword—he healed.

FLORETTE :

Ah, Stephen, I have longed to be a knight,  
And bear the cross—but not to bear the sword.  
And so I have been glad that I was born  
A maid—I could not bear to cut and kill,  
As Gaspard does—even to bring in peace.

STEPHEN :

'T is not the way, it cannot be the way.

FLORETTE :

Gaspard has fought in Palestine—he tells  
Such tales—they make me shudder—yet I know  
That he is brave and good.

STEPHEN :

'T is not the way.

"A little child shall lead them" I can hear  
The heavenly voices chant, "a child shall lead";  
And children bear no swords. A child shall lead,  
Children shall follow, children shall bring in peace!  
The black cross shall be black no longer—

FLORETTE :

Stephen,

At mass—sawest thou—

STEPHEN :

Aye! Hast thou seen too?

FLORETTE :

Almost—I saw—I thought that there was light—

STEPHEN :

A light indeed, but first the black cross hung there,  
The great black cross; it lay upon my soul  
Like death—like shame; and then, sudden, it flared  
As red as blood, and there it hung and glowed  
Searing my eyes, searching my heart, and then  
It changed to white—a white cross, heavenly white,  
That blessed and did not blind—it was as though  
I saw at last without the need of eyes  
At all, but with the soul—and then there grew

A sound of chanting—not the priests’—but sweet,  
And clear, and far away—

FLORETTE: I heard it too,  
But faintly, and I lost it.

STEPHEN: “Peace” they sang,  
“The peace of Christ—a little child shall lead.”  
(STEPHEN throws out his arms passionately)  
Ah, whither shall he lead them—and how soon?  
When shall the kingdom come?

(GASPARD reënters, on horseback. Seeing FLORETTE,  
he pulls his horse down.)

GASPARD:  
Florette! Thou here? I have searched everywhere.  
They said thou wert gone up by the wood path.  
We feared thou hadst slipped at the narrow part,  
And fallen off the ledge. Come! Up beside me!  
Thy father is cursing Ulrica for that she doth not watch thee  
better—and he’s too fat to curse, it doth not become him.  
Up, child, we’ll gallop home by the road, and be there before  
he have time to swear ten more oaths—though he take them at  
the gallop too—Keep off, boy! I have sent more Saracens to  
Hell by my horse’s heels than by my sword.\*

STEPHEN:  
To Hell hast thou sent no man, neither by thy horse’s heels nor  
by thy sword.

GASPARD:  
Why, how now, boy! Thy face is not so forward as thy words.

STEPHEN:  
To death thou mayst have sent many. To Hell canst thou not  
send any—nor yet to Heaven, nor to Purgatory.

\* For production indoors, or outdoors, where a horse is not used, the end of this speech is altered thus: “Come! Thy father is cursing Ulrica for that she doth not watch thee better—and he’s too fat to curse, it doth not become him. Here, boy, fetch my horse! He’s tethered just around the bend. But ‘ware his heels! I have sent more Saracens to Hell by my horse’s heels than by my sword.”

That power is given to no man, but only to God, and to His Christ.

GASPARD: Well, lad—have it as thou wilt, since thou quibblest so of matters I do not understand. Truly, if I may send all Saracens and evil men to death, I care not what comes of them after. Thou shouldst be a priest, boy. They have charge of these things. For me, give me a good horse, and a chance to slice off the heads of all heathen and robbers who come my way—I ask no more. Come, girl, up! 'Ware heels, I say!

(GASPARD lifts FLORETTE *up in front of him, and gallops off*. STEPHEN stands, watching them out of sight. Then he turns, and walks slowly out.)

## ACT II. CLOYES

(*The Same as in Act I*)

*The same hillside, outside the village. MARCEL enters from the left. He spies FRANÇOIS on the hill path at the back.*

MARCEL: François! Ho! François! Hast thou seen Stephen today?

FRANÇOIS (*A bigger boy, but very slow of speech*) Nay.

MARCEL: I have been searching for him since morning—first in the church and the town, and then over the sheep paths.

FRANÇOIS: I, too.

MARCEL: I wanted him to tell me more about the Holy Land, and the way it shall be won back.

FRANÇOIS: I, too.

MARCEL: His tales of it last night made my back creep.

FRANÇOIS: Mine, too.

MARCEL: And I could not sleep—and I dreamed and dreamed—

FRANÇOIS: I, too.

MARCEL (*Sees YVETTE, coming from the right*) Here comes Yvette; she will know. Yvette! Yvette! Where is Stephen?

YVETTE: Do I keep Stephen in my pocket? But indeed I do know where he is—he is where thou wouldest be, too—listening to the merchants who came this noon.

MARCEL: Merchants? From where? Are they still here? May I go and listen, too? Where are they?

YVETTE: They say only women ask questions, and thou hast asked five.

MARCEL: Nay, Yvette, but are they from the East? And have they seen black Saracens, and is it true that they eat children alive?

YVETTE: Spare thy tongue and use thy two ears. Here they come now.

(Enter, from the right, two MERCHANTS on horseback, with heavily-laden saddlebags laid over their horses.)

FIRST MERCHANT (*To his companion*) We are to follow this road about, and so come to our friend Bernardin.

SECOND MERCHANT: It is not far, they said? I have no mind to travel after nightfall.

MARCEL: 'T is but a bit of a way, Sir.

FIRST MERCHANT: And here are more boys and girls! Are there no men and women in the town, then?

MARCEL: We shall be men and women soon, Sir; we have but to grow.

(The MERCHANTS laugh)

FIRST MERCHANT: Nay, boy, grow not! 'T is my advice. Shrink, rather. Remember Hop-o'-my-thumb! He could travel in a man's pocket or a horse's ear. Thou are neither small enough for that nor big enough to go on thine own two legs. But dwindle a bit, boy, and I agree to take thee with me to the East, if not in my mare's ear, at least in my saddlebag.

MARCEL: I could go in thy saddlebag now, Sir!

YVETTE (*Laughing at his eagerness, draws him back towards her*)  
Hast thou been in the East, Sir?

FIRST MERCHANT: Not yet, pretty one; only as far as Italy. But next year we go, God willing. Or whenever the next band of Crusaders go forth.

MARCEL: Wilt thou go to fight?

FIRST MERCHANT: Nay, little son, fighting is not our trade. But any man is our friend who will sell to us or buy of us. We fight no one but robbers, and them only when we must,—and not in the dark. And so we 'll go on now.

(*They ride out, accompanied by the children, left.*  
*Enter, from the right, MARIE and URSULA*)

URSULA: Didst thou see the merchants, Marie?

MARIE: Aye, and heard them, too, as well as I could for the swarm of children round them—like bees round honey they were.

URSULA: And small wonder. Didst thou hear their tales of the Saracens, and of Francis the monk?

MARIE: He 's no monk, but a plain friar, walking the roads and preaching as any friar may—they say he was a merchant's son.

URSULA: May be. Merchant or no, he 's a holy man now, and can work miracles with his bare hands and a bit of prayer. They say the sun in Palestine hath been blood red since the last fighting.

MARIE: 'T will be blood red over the whole world if the black Saracens be not sent out of it. If all the knights were like young Gaspard, there would be different tales come to us from the holy wars.

URSULA: Aye, Gaspard is a good knight. He was with the merchants, asking them the news of Italy—and then he galloped

off up the hill the shorter way to bid old Bernardin make ready for their entertainment.

MARIE: He's a bold rider.

URSULA: Aye—and the merchants told him how an abbess in Italy hath seen a wondrous omen—a red cross flaming in the Eastern sky. And his Holiness the Pope will order a new crusade next year.

MARIE: Be these merchants from Italy?

URSULA: Aye, but they come now from Marseilles. And one of them hath seen the holy Francis, and hath a friend who knoweth a man whose mother hath been healed by him.

MARIE: We can be healed nearer home. Our own Saint Denys will help all who come to his shrine.

URSULA: True—'t is true—there be many saints, and much hope of healing for all who pray.

MARIE: Well, I would have all people pray, and especially the priests and old folk. But indeed I like not the way the children mope in the church these days; 't is not nature.

URSULA: They be good Christians, our village children.

MARIE: Good—aye; but not too good, say I—they're strange of late—they have no quarrels—

URSULA: Wouldst thou have them quarrel?

MARIE: I would have them do what nature makes them do—I would have boys fight and girls tease and quarrel.

URSULA: And what of the priests who preach that we are not to fight and quarrel?

MARIE: I would have them *preach*—'t is as natural to a priest to preach as to a boy to fight—but if a boy were to stop fighting and turn to preaching, he would be like a crowing hen, or

any other monstrous thing. Follow nature, I say. There come the children now.

URSULA: Nay, 't is only little Marcel.

MARIE: Where one is they all flock—and they're strange these days—mark what I say—they're not like children.

(Enter MARCEL)

URSULA: How now, Marcel? Hast lost something?

MARCEL: Nay, Dame Ursula, I was but waiting—I was looking for Stephen.

MARIE: Stephen the shepherd? He is with his sheep, or should be. Run home, Marcel, and help thy mother. Even with thy little legs and arms thou canst fetch water and tend the baby.

*(She goes off, hustling MARCEL, who goes out before her, reluctant, and ever turning to gaze back and up the hillside. URSULA follows them more slowly. As they are going off, FLORETTE is seen entering from the hill path at the rear. As she comes nearer, GASPARD emerges behind her from the same path. He strides forward to overtake her, and she sees him over her shoulder. She shrinks a little)*

FLORETTE: Gaspard! I knew not thou wert behind me!

GASPARD: I have not been behind thee long. Thou hast led me a chase!

And I have followed rabbits in my time.

FLORETTE: I am no rabbit, Gaspard, to be chased.

GASPARD: Nay, but something far more precious—too precious to leave flying down the wood path alone.

FLORETTE: But, 't is safe.

GASPARD: No paths are safe for a maid like thee, Florette. And then—this town—Florette, I like it not, that thou comest hither so often.

FLORETTE: I come to the church.

GASPARD: Thou hast thine own chapel—will it not serve thee for thy prayers? And it is not the church alone—I have found thee with these village youth—rough boys and girls—

FLORETTE: They are good boys and girls.

GASPARD: Good they may be, but not fit companions for my little Florette.

FLORETTE: Little I am no longer,—and thine I am not.

GASPARD: Nay, Florette—but thou knowest thy father's wish—and mine. And I had hoped it might be thy wish as well. We were always friends, from the day I first held thee on my knee, when I was a big boy, afraid almost to touch thee, thou wert so little, with thy great gray eyes and thy curls.

FLORETTE: Indeed, Gaspard, we have always been friends—and friends we are still. But I would not be followed—followed—watched! I would be free! My father keeps me caged—when he remembers me at all—and Ulrica—and now, thou, too! Only in the church do I feel free. I think sometimes I must be a nun!

GASPARD: A nun! A cage within a cage!

FLORETTE: Nay, a nun lives in prayer, and prayer is no cage—prayer is—wings!

GASPARD: Pray, then, and welcome—such wings I grudge thee not. But, little Florette—I am but a plain earth creature—I have no wings—but I love thee as a man may. Fly not too high! Here are the village children—come, Florette!

FLORETTE: I stay.

(*They stand a moment, measuring each other. Then GASPARD turns abruptly, and strides back up the hill path. MARCEL enters, running, from the left, with CLAIRE following behind him as she can*)

MARCEL: Florette, hast thou seen him?

FLORETTE: Who?

MARCEL: Stephen. I have searched for him all day—I wanted him to tell us more about—about the Great Miracle that shall be.

FLORETTE: He will tell us when he can.

MARCEL: Last night he told us tales—such tales, Florette—and today we cannot find him—Tell me, Florette, is it true, what Guilbert says,—that the Saracens eat Christians alive?

(*CLAIRE gives a cry and buries her face in FLORETTE's skirt*)

FLORETTE: Nay then, Marcel, thou frightenest the child with thy foolish talk. Claire, dearest, look up! Truly it is not so! Gaspard hath been there, and he says they be men like us—like our men.

MARCEL: But Guilbert—

(*YVETTE, entering, overhears the name*)

YVETTE: What of Guilbert?

FLORETTE: He hath been telling Marcel here that Saracens eat Christians alive.

YVETTE (*Merrily*) Nay, Marcel, boiled—boiled, with a bit of garlic.

FLORETTE: Hush, Yvette, little Claire will believe thee—do not mind them, little one!

(*GUILBERT enters from the left, followed by the other children*)

YVETTE: Here he comes. Guilbert, keep thy tongue in better order. Thou hast frightened little Claire, with thy talk of the Saracens.

GUILBERT: If she be frightened, 'tis her own fault. My talk was not for her. She will never go to the Saracens, and the Saracens will never come to her.

MARCEL (*Eagerly*) How can we tell that? Stephen says the Saracens shall never be overcome by the sword, but by a great miracle, one that we all may see. He says there is a new way, and that we children may help.

CLAIRE (*Wistfully*) And even *very* little ones.

FLORETTE: Blessed one! Thou dost help always, just by being here in the world with the rest of us.

YVETTE: There he comes now! His eyes are on the clouds. Be quiet all! Let's see when he will notice us!

(*From the hillside at the back, STEPHEN enters, as though out of some vision, whose atmosphere he still carries with him. He walks slowly forward, while the children hold their positions in breathless silence. As he comes closer, GUILBERT laughs, which breaks the spell. STEPHEN starts, pauses, and looks at them. At first he seems dazed, then he breaks into a radiant smile, full of boyish confidence and eagerness*)

STEPHEN:

All here together? All? I wanted you!  
I have come back to tell you—It is clear—  
The quest is clear, the way—

MARCEL:

Oh, Stephen! Tell us!

Will the merchants help?

ALL THE CHILDREN:

Tell us! Tell us! Tell us!

STEPHEN:

The merchants? God will help us—God and His Christ!  
In His hands are the waste places of the earth,  
The mountains and the seas are His also.  
A battle-ax or a grass-blade are as one to Him.  
We are His children; we shall go forth and conquer!  
Our armor shall be His holiness,  
And our sword shall be His love!  
Through us, the children of the world, shall come the Kingdom  
of Heaven.

And a little child shall lead them—

(*Gently he leads out CLAIRE and sets her before them*)

—and a little child shall lead them.

MARCEL:

Lead us, Stephen, lead us now!

STEPHEN:

Aye, now!

The youngest shall lead us—she is nearest God.

Claire, dost thou hear them calling? Dost thou hear  
Trumpets and bugles of the heavenly host?

(*CLAIRE nods, rapturously*)

Come then—they are calling! They will lead us!

Through the valleys, over the hills:

And the hills shall be made low.

And the rough places smooth to our feet,

And the night shall shine as the day!

GUILBERT:

And what when we get to the sea? Will it dry up  
Beneath our feet?

STEPHEN:

Why not? Or be rolled back  
as for the Children of Israel, so that they passed  
dry-shod. With God all things are possible.

And we are God's,—His young, swift messengers!

CLAIRe: I hear the bugles again!

FLORETTE:

I hear them too—

At last!

STEPHEN: I hear them always! Now they speak  
To all of you. Come! To Saint Denys first!  
To ask his blessing and to gather up  
The others!

YVETTE: Others?

STEPHEN:

The other blessed bands

Who will join us—for the message is to all  
The children of the land—and they will hear.  
They are waiting, they are listening, they are ready!

FRANÇOIS:

And shall we say farewell to our mothers?

STEPHEN:

Nay,

No farewells—we shall be as near them there

In the Holy Land, as here. On to Saint Denys!

Follow!

ALL THE CHILDREN:

On to Saint Denys! On to Saint Denys!

(YVETTE runs out, to the left) \*

MARCEL:

May we carry pennons—the ones we made

For our mock battles?

STEPHEN: Aye, indeed, why not?

Till God shall send his own banners before us

Flaming in glory forth across the sky!

Till then carry what earthly ones ye will.

(The children run off and return, bearing the pennons  
they had used in their mock battle. MARCEL returns,  
first)

MARCEL:

On to Jerusalem! Come, Jacques! Come, Claire!

STEPHEN:

Come! Lift up our leader, little Claire,

And she shall hold the cross before our band!

(MARIE and URSULA enter)

MARIE:

Look at the mad children! Jacques! Marcell!

MARCEL:

On to Palestine! Follow the cross and Stephen!

(YVETTE reenters, swiftly, with a little bundle)

URSULA:

Yvette, girl!

MARIE:

Come out of that rough mob!

\* This incident may be omitted, if it blurs the action. In that case omit also Yvette's speech to Claire as she brings the cakes, and Claire's answer.

YVETTE:

Nay, dame, here's no one rough.

FLORETTE:

All's gentleness,

Dame Ursula, and love.

YVETTE:

Claire, wait for me!

I ran to get some little cakes for thee,

I have them safe, here in the bundle now.

CLAIRE:

I need no little cakes—I hold the cross!]

ALL THE CHILDREN:

On to Saint Denys! On to meet the rest!

(*The Children stream off, taking the road to the left*)

URSULA:

[What plays these children find to play at?

MARIE:

Mad play I call it. They've gone down the road

And up the hill, and on into the woods.

URSULA:

I thought they would turn back.

MARIE:

They'll come back soon.

They've had no dinner yet.

URSULA:

I do not hear them.

Listen! How still the place is now without them!

MARIE:

Aye, still enough! No good to stand here watching.

URSULA:

They'll come back soon again—Listen, Marie!

MARIE:

Singing! They're singing!

URSULA:

It is what the young

Crusaders sang—the last that went, I mind me.

MARIE:

Hymns!

'T is not in nature they should be singing hymns!

And in the morning—when they're not in church!

URSULA:

Hast ever thought, Marie, there may be things  
In nature we don't know of?

(*The singing rises again, but more faintly*)

There it is

Again! Come, Marie!]

(*MARIE and URSULA go off, slowly. The singing is still heard, more and more faintly. At last it dies away in the distance, and there is silence on the little hillside*)

### ACT III. ST. DENYS

(*Shrine at right*)

*A lame man enters, crosses, kneels before the shrine and goes off. A priest enters, kneels before the shrine, and goes out. An old woman enters from the hill at the back. She is half carrying a little girl (COLETTE), who drags her feet with difficulty.*

OLD WOMAN: There! There! 'T will be better soon!

COLETTE: Look! Look! There! The shrine! Oh, grandmother!  
Canst thou help me but a very little bit more! I will take a long breath and make myself very light!

OLD WOMAN: Thou art light enough already. God knows—too light! Come! I'll carry thee—there! Lie there! 'T will put strength into thy poor back may be, just to lie close to the blessed saint's home.

COLETTE: Is this his home? Does the blessed St. Denys live here?

OLD WOMAN: 'T is more his home than any other spot on earth, but his real home is in Heaven.

COLETTE: But does he come here sometimes?

OLD WOMAN: Aye, truly. And when he comes, he helps all who wait for him here.

COLETTE: Does he come at night or in the daytime?

OLD WOMAN: Now who can say that? The blessed saints come as they will.

COLETTE: If I were a blessed saint, I would come at night, because that is such a lonesome time for children when they cannot sleep.

OLD WOMAN: Lonesome enough for all of us. Lie there now, child, and rest. I'll down to the village for a bit of bread for thee.  
*(She goes off. There comes a sound of children's voices, and laughter, and snatches of song. COLETTE sits up to listen)*

COLETTE: Children! They sound so happy—they are coming nearer—they are coming here!

*(CHILDREN appear at the back, above. They point to the shrine, and call back to others. One tall boy, PIERRE, leads)*

PIERRE: The shrine! Come on!

*(They run in and kneel—the others join them. PIERRE rises, and sees COLETTE)*

PIERRE: Why don't you get up? Are you hurt?

COLETTE: No—no more than always. My feet will not do what I would have them.

PIERRE: Mine will! They have brought me all the way across those hills today, and still they want to dance.

SECOND CHILD: So do mine.

THIRD CHILD: And mine!

COLETTE: Why have you come so far? You do not need the Saint?

PIERRE: Nay,—but he might need me to work for him.

SECOND CHILD: I came because the rest came.

THIRD CHILD: So did I.

FOURTH CHILD: And they said the Saint was bestirring himself and making many miracles.

SECOND CHILD: He cured a lame man last moon.

PIERRE: The Saint is wide awake these days. So would I be if I were a saint. I would do miracles and miracles, till there were none left to do, and the whole world was on tiptoe. I would set the world dancing, and then, for a last miracle, I would become a man again myself, and dance with them, and leave my saint's robes blowing about among the stars!

JEANNETTE (*Saucily*) Dance now, Pierre! Thou hast no saint's robes *yet* to trip thee.

PIERRE: Come, then—dance! All dance! Dance a miracle—and show the good Saint the way.

JEANNETTE: How? A miracle?

PIERRE: Why,—one of us lie down—he is sick, or lame or blind—and the rest dance about him and be sorry for him—and pray—and dance again—and at last the Saint takes notice of us, and the sick one is suddenly well again, and gets up, and dances to show how well he is.

COLETTE (*Sadly*) I could be the sick one at the first but not at the last.

PIERRE (*With quick pity*) Thou shalt sit here and watch. Here, Jeannette, thou shalt be sick—blind—So! now all the rest, dance—dance like mad! faster! faster! Now stop! And pray! Now—Jeannette! Thou art cured! Thou canst see as well as any! Up! Look about! Use thine eyes! Now dance among us here, to show the good Saint how well thou canst see! Do not so much as graze one of us. So! Now all kneel and thank the blessed Saint!

(Enter a PRIEST—pauses)

PRIEST: How now! What's this? (*Gives them his blessing as they remain kneeling. They rise*)  
Ye are not our village children?

PIERRE: Nay, Father, we came over the mountain.

PRIEST: There is no village that way short of Grandcourt.

SECOND CHILD: We came from there.

PRIEST (*Smiling*) Your legs are sound! But here's a tired one—

Nay, 't is little Colette—thou hast come far too.

(*More voices outside—another little group of children appear, and point down toward the shrine*)

PRIEST: More children!

PIERRE: My faith! 'T is the good Saint's day for visitors!

(*The newcomers run on, but pause to kneel before the PRIEST and receive his blessing*)

PRIEST: And ye! Are ye from Grandcourt, too?

NEWCOMER: Nay—from Bonneval.

PRIEST: Are all the children running over the hills? How came ye hither?

JEANNETTE: We came to see a miracle.

PRIEST: A miracle? Miracles come not when we look for them. Receive the good Saint's blessing, and go back. Back to your homes—over the hills and home.

(*The PRIEST raises his hand and blesses the whole group, then turns and passes out. Enter MERCHANT BERNARDIN and GASPARD, on foot. BERNARDIN looks about, without breath to speak*)

GASPARD: Why—what a crowd of youngsters! (*Scans them keenly*) None here from Cloyes?

PIERRE: From Grandcourt, Sir.

SECOND CHILD: From Bonneval, Sir.

GASPARD: Is it some holiday? Ye are full young to be running over the countryside.

PIERRE: Faith, Sir, if we do not our running while we are young  
we shall do none at all.

BERNARDIN (*Recovering breath*) The boy says true, Gaspard. This  
bit of climb from where we left our horses hath proved too  
much for my legs, and my wind, too—and all for naught—  
they are not here!

GASPARD: Hast thou seen any children from Cloyes?

PIERRE: Nay—none—

BERNARDIN: A youth named Stephen—and a young girl named  
Florette? (*Children shake their heads*) Thou seest, Gaspard—  
't was all a fool's errand! Thou art ever so mad to be doing  
something! Always doing—right or wrong—doing!

GASPARD: Well, Sir, and wouldest thou sit still on thy hilltop and  
do nothing, whilst thy girl roams the woods and the roads?

BERNARDIN: She has always roamed as she would, until thou camest  
back to turn my hair white with thy worrying ways.

GASPARD: [Nay, then, I cannot sit quiet and see her run wild—  
't is not my nature!]

BERNARDIN: And what about her nature, boy? Girls be like donkeys  
—lunge for their heads, and they fling away—turn aside and  
pull a handful of grass, and they come sniffing up to watch!—  
and besides that, my legs and my wind won't bear this life—  
Come! the maid is home by now, I make no doubt.

GASPARD: I will stay here.

BERNARDIN: Nay—I need thy shoulder to the horses.

(*They go out. After a moment there is heard a distant sound of singing, "Fairest Lord Jesus." It grows louder, and the CHILDREN of Cloyes appear above, led by STEPHEN. The children below fall back expectantly as STEPHEN appears coming slowly down. MARCEL darts ahead of him, sees the other children, and turns, calling back to STEPHEN*)

MARCEL: Look, Stephen—here are the others, as thou saidst—they are here before us!

STEPHEN (*Pausing on the hillside a little above the shrine, and smiling down at the CHILDREN below him*) Aye—they are here—and yet others are here, whom ye see not—angels and spirits, and the blessed Saint—and great overshadowing presences. (*He comes nearer, and scans searchingly the stranger children*) Why did ye come?

SOME: We came to see a miracle.

OTHERS:

We came because the rest did.

PIERRE: . . . . . I came—why—

I came because there was nothing hard enough  
At home to do. I wanted something hard.

I thought the Saint might set me something hard.

I am so strong.

(CLAIRES runs across to COLETTE)

But this one is n't strong.

She came because she needs the Saint herself.

COLETTE:

My grandmother—she brought me—and she says  
The blessed Saint will help me if he comes.

But he is almost always up in Heaven.

A CHILD: He was here at the last moon—he healed a blind man.

STEPHEN:

Ye wanted to see miracles? Ye shall—

Nay, ye shall do them—there was a blind man healed

Last moon, ye say? Ah, what are we but blind!

Blind, we have all been blind—or we should see

Beside us the Lord Christ walking, beckoning

To us to follow him,—and all about,

The multitudes of all the Heavenly Host;

And deaf we are, or we should hear their bugles

Calling us—calling us—

PIERRE (*Puzzled, but interested*) .

Calling us to what?

STEPHEN :

Calling us out to serve the God of Love.

PIERRE :

I 'll fight for him—but who is there to kill?

The Saracens are far away—I 'm going

When I 'm a man—I 'll serve him—never fear.

STEPHEN :

The God of Love is never served by killing.

PIERRE :

What *should* we do with Saracens but kill them?

STEPHEN :

Our blessed Lord killed no one—he forgave

His enemies, and prayed for them, and healed them.

Shall we do otherwise, being his children?

PIERRE :

Oh, I don't *want* to kill things,—but a man

Is different; he learns how to kill what's bad—

STEPHEN :

That is not learning—that's forgetting—We

Are children still—we have not yet forgot.

We must remember always.

PIERRE :

What must we

Remember?

STEPHEN :

We must remember him—the Christ

Remember we can never kill what's bad

With sword or spear or battle-ax.

PIERRE :

How, then?

STEPHEN :

With love—with flaming love—with love like His.

PIERRE :

That's hard.

STEPHEN :

Thou'st longed for something hard.

PIERRE:

But not that way—I want to use my arms,  
And legs.

STEPHEN: And thou shalt use them.

I know—

Ye have come, ye know not why—

Listen! All!

I tell you why!

Ye are ready—ye know not for what—

I will tell you!

The White Christ is calling us, the children of this land,  
To take up his banner—the banner of the holy cross—and go  
forth.

Why do ye want to become men and women?

All men must become as little children—

The Lord hath said it—

Before they can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,  
And when his Heavenly Kingdom comes on earth,  
It must come through the children!

Ah, believe him, children—believe our Lord!

Trust him! Go forth! Sweep over the land.

We shall gather in the rest as we go!

We shall become an army, glorious, invincible!

Without weapons, without armor, we shall sweep on—

On to the sea—

On over the sea to the Holy Land—

On to Golgotha and Olivet and the Holy Sepulcher!

And the Saracen shall be blind no longer—

He shall rage and hate no longer,

For rage and hate cannot live where love is. And we shall  
bring love with us—

Love strong as the wind, wide as the sky, flaming as the great  
Sun in heaven—

The love of our leader, the White Christ

And of our Father in Heaven—

To whom be glory and honor and power and dominion  
Forever and ever!

PIERRE (*Sinking to his knees*) Amen!

THE OTHERS (*Kneeling*) Amen! Amen!

PIERRE: Lead us, boy! We follow!

ALL: Aye! We follow! We follow!

MARCEL (*Rising and raising his pennon*) To Palestine! Lead us to Palestine!

COLETTE (*Rising to her knees*) I must go, too! I must go! How can I? St. Denys, blessed St. Denys, pity me! (*She leans, sobbing, against the foot of the shrine*)

STEPHEN (*Turning to her*) Pity thee! Truly St. Denys doth pity thee. But the Lord Christ heals thee! (*Very tenderly, but with utter conviction*) Rise up, little Sister! Rise up, in the name of the Lord Christ, the loving, the Almighty!

(COLETTE raises her head. Her eyes are fixed on STEPHEN. She remains kneeling, but more and more erect. Slowly she rises, as if in a trance, and walks, still slowly, but firmly, towards STEPHEN. The rest kneel breathless, watching her)

COLETTE (*As she rises*) I am walking! I am strong! Jesu! Blessed, blessed Lord!

CHILDREN (*Under their breath, still kneeling*) A miracle! A miracle! He is holy! The boy is holy!

(GASPARD reenters. He stands amazed, sweeps one look over the scene, and sees STEPHEN and FLORETTE)

GASPARD: Florette! So! Thou art here, as I thought!—I have come for thee!

FLORETTE (*Speaking in a monotone, as though out of trance, and without really looking at him*) Thou art a stranger. I go not with strangers. Here is my leader. I know him, and I follow him.

GASPARD: That boy—that crazy priest-boy!

ALL: He is holy! He hath wrought a miracle!

GASPARD: Florette! I deal not with these babes—Florette, once more—come! (*FLORETTE still gazes at STEPHEN*) Nay then! (*He strides across towards her*)

STEPHEN (*Quietly*) Touch her not!

(*The CHILDREN rise and surge forward, but pause and fall back a moment, listening to the next words*)

GASPARD: I have her father's warrant.

STEPHEN: I have her Heavenly Father's warrant.

GASPARD: She is to be my bride some day.

STEPHEN: Today and now—she is the bride of Christ.

GASPARD: Nay, then! She may be the bride of Christ in a convent, if she will—but not under thy leadership, thou boy with the smooth priest's tongue! (*A threatening murmur rises from the CHILDREN*) I say, thou shalt not have her! (*He draws his sword, and the CHILDREN shrink in front of him*) Nay—I do not carve up babies! And even that boy there—I would fell him but with the flat of my sword—its edge I keep for men. (*MARCEL rushes at his knees*) Off! Spider! (*As GASPARD looks down, PIERRE lunges from behind, and wrests his sword out of his hand*)

PIERRE: How now—Man! (*The CHILDREN surge forward again*)

STEPHEN: Give here! (*PIERRE hands him the sword*) No blows! He is a man—he has forgotten. But once he was a child like us. I take from him but his sword, and lo! (*He reverses the sword, holding it high, so that its handle becomes a cross*) It hath become the sign of peace; the emblem of our faith! It is the Crusade! The Crusade of the children! The Crusade of Love!

MARCEL: The Crusade! The Crusade! On to the sea! On to Palestine! On to Jerusalem!

ALL: Palestine! Jerusalem!

(STEPHEN, still holding the reversed sword high above his head, comes forward through the midst of the CHILDREN, who fall in behind him, their eyes on him or on the cross he holds, or on the sky above them. COLETTE, her eyes always on him, walks just behind him. PIERRE, who has taken MARCEL'S banner, is the last to go. He stands below the Shrine, his head thrown back, his eyes on GASPARD. As the last child goes, PIERRE takes a few swift steps towards GASPARD, stops, and raises the banner high, as though in boyish challenge. GASPARD stands motionless and grim. PIERRE turns and follows the CHILDREN. As the CHILDREN went off they resumed their hymn, which, during this pantomime between PIERRE and GASPARD, has been swelling in volume, as all the child voices take it up. Then gradually it dies away in the distance. GASPARD, who has remained standing motionless before the Shrine, watches them go off. At length he turns to the Shrine and kneels before it a moment. He rises, looks off once more in the direction the CHILDREN have taken, then turns abruptly and strides up the hillside and out of sight)

#### ACT IV. ON THE ROAD

Two BEGGARS enter and cross slowly. One of them is young, the other is an old man. They carry heavy sticks, and leathern wallets.

YOUNG BEGGAR: The roads are empty these days—hungry times!

OLD BEGGAR: I smelled wine as I passed some merchants yesterday—they must have spilled some—they spilled none on me, curse 'em!

YOUNG BEGGAR: I smelled roast meat outside the great house down below, but they drove me off.

OLD BEGGAR: I got a bit of bread from some children back there—mad children—quite mad—they let me take their bread, and then had none themselves. They were singing.

YOUNG BEGGAR: Let them sing! I would find a haystack for the night. Look at the sun!

(*GASPARD enters*)

GASPARD: Good even, fellows!

BEGGARS: Good even, Sir!

GASPARD: Have ye seen any folk passing along the road?

YOUNG BEGGAR: No, Sir.

OLD BEGGAR: I saw some children, Sir.

GASPARD (*Suddenly attentive*) Children? Where?

OLD BEGGAR: Back there, Sir,—not far.

GASPARD: Coming this way?

OLD BEGGAR: Coming—no way,—singing—mad, maybe.

GASPARD: Girls?

OLD BEGGAR: Aye—and boys.

GASPARD (*Giving him money*) Spend that at the next inn.

YOUNG BEGGAR (*Coming up behind*) And me? Give me a bit too, Sir?

GASPARD: Thee? Nay, then, go work, and earn thy bit! Thy legs and arms are young yet—for shame, to beg along the road!

YOUNG BEGGAR (*Reaching for GASPARD's sword, and deftly pulling it out of its sheath*) Right, Sir! No begging! Help, Comrade!

(*GASPARD pulls out a little dagger from his belt, and, beating aside the sword, he grapples and throws the*

*young BEGGAR, though hampered by the old man, who tries to trip him)*

GASPARD: So!—Get up! Thou 'rt not worth the kicking. I'd have you both dangling at the next gallows if I had the time. Be off! Quick! (*The BEGGARS slink off*)

(*A man enters, dressed somewhat like a monk, with a hood over his head. He is crooning to himself. About his shoulders hangs a festoon of flowers*)

GASPARD: Good even, fellow! Why so covered up? Art afraid of the setting sun on thy complexion? And wreaths about thee, too!

(*The figure turns towards him, with his back to the audience, and raises the hood. GASPARD recoils, with his hand over his eyes*)

GASPARD: God! Stand back, leper! There! There's money for thee! And there! God pity thee!

LEPER (*Almost in monotone, expressive of remoteness and serenity*)  
God does pity me. And he hath sent his angels—

GASPARD: Angels!

LEPER: Angels—children—children of Heaven—children of love—

GASPARD: Real children, meanest thou?

LEPER: How should I know? But 't was real bread they gave me—and these be real flowers—they gathered them, and twined them all about me.

GASPARD: Where, man? When?

LEPER: Where, I know not. When, I know not. Sir, I have been in Heaven. The children brought me there. It is about me now. They bade me pray, and be healed. My soul is healed already. I care not for my body—I cannot feel it any longer. I hear them singing—singing—singing—

(*He goes off murmuring to himself. While GASPARD stands silent, gazing after him, there comes a distant*

*sound of singing. It grows louder. GASPARD turns and listens intently. He goes toward the sound and looks off, then returns quickly and retires, back up the hill, and disappears among the trees. The singing grows louder, then breaks off, and there are sounds of child voices, calling. PIERRE enters, carrying little CLAIRE on his back. MARCEL is trying to keep up beside him)*

MARCEL: Wait, Pierre! Wait for the others!

PIERRE: True, little giant, true! We must have mercy on the rest.  
And the old horse must have mercy on his young rider. Am I  
a hard steed to ride, Claire?

CLAIRe (*Pats his arm*) Good horse!

PIERRE (*Putting her down*) Good grass for the old horse! I'll  
roll in it! Ah! What a life 't would be, to be a horse—a  
great prancing stallion, and go galloping, galloping all the way  
to the Holy Land!

CLAIRe (*Lying back—faintly*) I would rather be a little bird—and  
fly—flying is so smooth and easy! And there are no hills when  
you fly. (*She closes her eyes*)

PIERRE: Here, Marcel—bring that moss and make a pillow. There,  
little one—is that good?

CLAIRe: Oh, so good! And truly, Pierre, I am not tired—not tired  
at all—only so sleepy—and the bushes look so queer—are they  
bushes or monks?—big ragged monks.

MARCEL: Bushes, Claire—See—I'll shake one—oh! my legs feel  
so queer!

PIERRE: Sit down, little giant! Even giants must needs rest some-  
times.

MARCEL (*Sinking down*) But truly I am not tired.

PIERRE: Well, then, at least wait for the others. 'T were unkind to stride on ahead of all.

(Enter FLORETTE and YVETTE, with COLETTE between them. COLETTE is hardly able to drag herself.

FLORETTE and YVETTE are almost exhausted)

YVETTE: Nay, Colette, thou art a wonder at walking—the rest are far behind,—let's wait for them.

FLORETTE: There's Pierre! And Marcel!

YVETTE (*Anxiously*) And Claire? She was with them—Claire!

PIERRE: Shh! (He points to the little sleeping figure, takes FLORETTE's place beside COLETTE and draws her on, letting her down gently so that she half lies on the ground, her head and shoulders against YVETTE. FLORETTE bends over CLAIRE, then sinks down beside her and gently strokes her hair)

MARCEL: Where's Stephen?

YVETTE: Preaching to the village children, and some ran back to get bread. They will bring some to Colette here. She let the beggar have all hers.

MARCEL: I gave him mine, too—he was so old!

COLETTE: I had bread enough—it is not that—but I cannot walk—I thought I could!

YVETTE: Thought, Colette! Nay, thou knowest! Not one of us hath climbed the hills as thou hast done—even Pierre here—The good Saint hath sent thee a bit of weariness now, to help the rest of us. Thou wouldest lead us on all night else.

MARCEL: And Florette gave all her bread to the strange man with the hood—he said he was not a monk but he had a hood over his face. I could not see his face—couldst thou, Florette?

FLORETTE (*Coming out of her dream*) His face? I saw it.

MARCEL: Was he old, too? Was that why thou gavest him thy bread?

FLORETTE: Old? I cannot tell—Stephen blessed him, and his face was shining with the blessing. When faces are shining they are neither old nor young.

MARCEL: How soon shall we come to the Holy Land? Is it beyond those hills, think you?

PIERRE (*Grimly*) Aye—beyond—

CLAIRE (*Starting up out of terrified dreams and trying to walk*) Yvette! Yvette! Oh, I cannot run, I am so tired! So tired!

FLORETTE (*Swiftly kneeling, she gathers the child in her arms, crooning over her*) Shh, little Claire! Little one! There is no need to run. 'T is bedtime now and thine angels are closing thine eyes.

MARCEL: Look, Claire—the first star! 'T is one of the stars in the great pot. Dost know, Claire? A little man lives up there, in the star—he watches the pot, and it boils and boils and boils—and some day 't will boil over—and then will come the end of the world!

YVETTE: Hush thee, Marcel—dost think the end of the world a good thing to think on at bedtime?

MARCEL: Better than black Saracens, Yvette.

(*Cries outside of "Stephen!" "The Crusade!" "Jerusalem!" Other calls of "Yvette!" "Pierre!" YVETTE rises and calls back—PIERRE runs almost off-side and stands, calling and signaling with a sweep of strong uplifted arm. Enter children, with STEPHEN on their shoulders. GUILBERT walks behind, munching a hunk of bread*)

CHILDREN: Stephen! Stephen, the Captain! Stephen, the King!  
Get him a horse! A big black horse! No, a white one! Get him a gold coach! I saw one once! Aye! A gold coach! And all we will be the horses.

STEPHEN: Nay! Nay! Children! Listen! Set me down! (*They set him down, and gather about him, growing suddenly very still*) Stephen, the Captain, ye call me! Stephen, the King! I am no captain—I am no king! Christ is our King!

MARCEL: But—a big black horse!

ANOTHER CHILD (*Wistfully*) I saw a gold coach once!

GUILBERT: And we could carry bread on it—

(PIERRE strides across, takes GUILBERT'S hunk of bread, and brings it to FLORETTE, who breaks little pieces and tries to make CLAIRE eat)

MARCEL: We could carry Colette when she was tired.

STEPHEN: Colette! Little Sister! (*He comes forward and stands beside her*)

COLETTE (*Looking up, her eyes full of appeal*) Stephen!

STEPHEN: Art thou tired, then?

COLETTE (*Half rising*) I—dreamed that I was tired—and that I could not walk—

STEPHEN: Wake, Colette! Come! (*She slowly rises. He turns to the others*) There is a monastery below—we shall pray there, and sleep. Come! Come, Colette!

(COLETTE follows, PIERRE on one side of her, YVETTE on the other, watching her anxiously)

COLETTE: Nay, nay, I am strong again—I am awake, and strong. (*She goes slowly out, following STEPHEN. The others surge out ahead. PIERRE and YVETTE go, too. They are watching her so intently that they do not realize that FLORETTE and CLAIRE have remained behind. MARCEL goes out last, talking to himself as he points up at the first stars beginning to twinkle overhead*)

MARCEL: I see six stars—seven—eight—nine! I hope the kettle will not boil over tonight!

FLORETTE: Claire! Little Claire! Thou must wake, too! And be strong, like Colette. Claire! (*She tries to lift her.* CLAIRE rouses—she sits up—then suddenly struggles to her feet, while FLORETTE tries to hold her)

CLAIRe: Yvette! Where am I? Yvette! Yvette! Oh, I am so frightened!

FLORETTE: Yvette will come soon. (*Draws her down beside her again*) 'T is bedtime now, Claire. Say thy prayer, and sleep. I will say it with thee.

(*They repeat together*)

I lay me down upon my bed,  
Angels hover 'round my head,  
If death surprise me while I sleep  
I give my soul to God to keep.  
Sleep, Jesus, sleep, my Savior,  
Sleep in my heart till day doth peep.  
I give my soul to mighty God,  
To Jesus Christ, my fairest Lord,  
To Holy Spirit, deep adored—  
Sleep, Jesus, sleep, my Savior,  
Sleep in my heart till day's abroad.

(CLAIRe *sleeps*—FLORETTE holds her head, stroking her hair, while she murmurs to herself—)

"I give my soul to mighty God,  
To Jesus Christ, my fairest Lord,  
To Holy Spirit, deep adored.  
Sleep, Jesus, sleep, my Savior,  
Sleep in my heart till day's abroad."

(*From the upper hillside appears the young beggar, reconnoitering. He comes quietly nearer while FLORETTE is repeating the last line. Behind him, however, appears GASPARD. GASPARD descends upon him without a sound, throttles him from behind and throws him. They struggle together, off to one side, and*

*disappear. After a few moments, GASPARD reappears and descends toward FLORETTE)*

GASPARD (*Gently*) Florette! Child!

(FLORETTE, recalled as from a vision, raises her head, attentive, with no trace of fear)

GASPARD (*Almost beside her*) Florette!

FLORETTE: Gaspard! (*Half rising*) Hush! Do not waken her.

GASPARD: Where are the others?

FLORETTE: Gone on to the monastery.

GASPARD: And they left thee here alone?

FLORETTE: It was Claire! I stayed with Claire. First she slept and then she was so frightened I had to hold her.

GASPARD: And that priest lad?

FLORETTE: Stephen? He was leading them and helping Colette.

GASPARD: And leaving thee?

FLORETTE: There is no danger. I am not afraid.

GASPARD: Thou hadst need to be! Above thee but now came sneaking down a great brute fellow—a beggar—I throttled him and rolled him in the bushes. But if I had not come—

FLORETTE: God was watching. He sent thee.

GASPARD: He sent me not. I came.

FLORETTE: And the beggar would have done me no harm.

GASPARD: Florette, I must teach thee fear.

FLORETTE: I will not learn, Gaspard.

GASPARD: Come back with me!

FLORETTE: I cannot.

GASPARD: And if I carried thee! I could!

FLORETTE: Then, indeed, thou mightest teach me fear, Gaspard.  
But thou wilt not—

GASPARD: It is mad! A mad quest, of mad children, under a mad leader! Mad he must be, and not bad, or he would not have left thee thus.

FLORETTE: He, too, has not learned fear—

GASPARD: Nay, then, he shall,—or die. The world is ruled by fear.

FLORETTE: Thy world, Gaspard.

GASPARD: My world, Florette—our world.

FLORETTE: Not Stephen's world.

GASPARD: A madman's world—no real one.

FLORETTE: I am at home there.

GASPARD: At home there—thou! And the brutal world, the real world, creeping up to murder thee—or worse! Florette! Little Florette! Come back!

FLORETTE: I cannot, Gaspard.

GASPARD: Then I follow thee!

FLORETTE (*Eagerly*) Thou wilt join us? Follow Stephen?

GASPARD: Stephen! No! But thee!

FLORETTE: I will not be followed—I am no leader but a follower.

GASPARD: I will protect thee as I did tonight.

FLORETTE: I will not be protected. God will guard me.

GASPARD: God sends me to guard thee. Thou thyself hast said it.

FLORETTE: And thou thyself hast said He sent thee not—

CLAIRE (*Half wakes again, terrified*) There! There! Yvette!  
Where is Yvette? (*She runs toward FLORETTE, sees GASPARD, and cowers, terrified*)

FLORETTE: Claire! Claire—hush! It is Gaspard—he is good and kind— (*Tries to hold CLAIRE, who is too strong for her*) Gaspard! Help me! Take her in thine arms a moment!

GASPARD (*Gathers CLAIRE into his arms and stands with his head bent over her hair, while FLORETTE holds her hand and lays her cheek against CLAIRE's*) Claire! It is Gaspard. See! I will carry thee to Yvette.

FLORETTE: He will carry thee, Claire—he is so strong.

GASPARD: Where—Florette? Which way? Show me the way—

FLORETTE: That way—See, little Claire—we are going to find Yvette and Stephen.

GASPARD: Florette—thou hast called me good and kind and strong—and see, I am helping thee. My world is helping thine.

(*They go off*)

#### ACT V. MARSEILLES

*At the right, in the background, the water is seen; at the left a road sweeps upward towards the town.*

*Enter, as from the waterfront, two CITIZENS, dressed with some elegance. They walk on slowly, now and then pausing and pointing back over the water, as though discussing the shipping. Towards them, down the road from the town, comes BERNARDIN. He is hobbling along, puffing as always, and looking about him uncertainly. His whole air is in marked contrast to the elegant nonchalance of the CITIZENS.*

BERNARDIN: Good Morrow, Sirs!

CITIZENS: Good Morrow.

BERNARDIN: I am a stranger here, but just arrived.

FIRST CITIZEN: You are welcome to Marseilles.

SECOND CITIZEN: Do you go farther or do you stop here?

BERNARDIN: I hope I go no farther. I have come to find my daughter—

FIRST CITIZEN: Does she visit here? Or is she with the sisters, yonder in the convent?

BERNARDIN (*Explosively, as always*) Visit? No! Sisters? No! She's gone—lost—these days and weeks.

SECOND CITIZEN (*Coldly*) Lost? But why dost thou come here? Is Marseilles the hiding place of lost daughters?

BERNARDIN: I cannot tell, Sirs; I thought she might be with the children—they call themselves crusaders. A boy—one Stephen—leads them, or did—Stephen of Cloyes.

SECOND CITIZEN: Ah, so! Your daughter's with them?

BERNARDIN: I do not know, Sir.

FIRST CITIZEN: How old a girl?

BERNARDIN: Fifteen, Sir; sixteen soon.

FIRST CITIZEN: I saw some that might be as old as that.

SECOND CITIZEN: Aye, indeed, I saw some too.

BERNARDIN: Any from Cloyes?

SECOND CITIZEN: From Cloyes, from St. Denys, from Bonneval, from all over France. The madness hath seized them all.

FIRST CITIZEN (*Breaking in curtly*) They sail at sundown, with the tide. Thou hast no time to lose if thou wouldest pluck out one.

BERNARDIN: Where are they? (*As if going*)

SECOND CITIZEN: Stay, Sir; they must come this way. The ships lie close below. (*They pass him and walk on towards the town, turning to look back at BERNARDIN, with quietly ironic smiles*)

(Enter GASPARD, *from the water, walking rapidly*.

BERNARDIN, *stumping along towards the river, almost bumps into him, and rebounds, astonished*)

BERNARDIN: Gaspard! Thou here?

GASPARD (*Arrested, at first amazed, then grimly scornful*) Bernardin!

So thou hast stirred thyself at last!

BERNARDIN: Hast thou news of her?

GASPARD (*Very grim and quiet*) Aye.

BERNARDIN: She is here?

GASPARD: Aye.

BERNARDIN: The Saints be praised, then all is well.

GASPARD: Praise the Saints if thou wilt, but not because all is well,  
as thou callest it. (*Passes him*)

BERNARDIN: Nay, but tell me, Gaspard; take me with thee.

(*Follows puffily after him. GASPARD slows down reluctantly and stands silent*)

BERNARDIN: Well? Gaspard?

GASPARD: Well?

BERNARDIN: Thou hast her safe, thou sayest?

GASPARD: I said no such thing—I said she was here.

BERNARDIN: She is sick? Or—worse? That boy? That Stephen?

GASPARD: The boy's a Saint—and ripe for martyrdom.

A mad Saint—and the martyrdom will come.

BERNARDIN: Well, let it come. The girl is well, thou sayest

GASPARD: I *never* said the girl was well. I said  
The boy was mad—they are all mad together.

BERNARDIN: Florette?

GASPARD: Mad, too, and nigh to death.

BERNARDIN :

To death!

Holy Saints! Where lies she?

GASPARD :

Nay—she walks,

And speaks, and sings,—and prays.

BERNARDIN :

Why, then, 't is well;

A little madness doth not hurt a maid,

Marriage will cure that; we will take her home,

If thou hast still a mind to—

GASPARD :

Bernardin!

Let's have this out! These weeks I have followed her,

Watched over her. At first she did not know

That I was there, and then she knew, and bade me

Leave her—she has no fear—but still I followed

Unseen, and at the last she let me carry

The little children when their feet grew tired—

That she could not forbid—and so we came

Hither at last, together, and she trusts me.

BERNARDIN :

Why, then, 't is well—she 'll go with you.

GASPARD :

She 'll go

Whither she must go, if she can—she 'll go

With Stephen.

BERNARDIN :

But she cannot if we hold her.

'T is but an hour now, and the ships sail

And he is gone and done with.

GASPARD :

I 'll not hold her.

She shall be free.

BERNARDIN :

Nay, then, I am her father

And I can force her—

GASPARD :

And I am her lover,

And I 'll not have her forced.

BERNARDIN :

But—

GASPARD (*In still, white anger, changing at the last to utter scorn*)

Promise me,

Promise thou 'lt keep those great, fat, beefy hands

Of thy spirit off her spirit—leave her free—  
 Or else I 'll roll thy body down that bank  
 And leave it there, until the ships have gone.  
 Promise—thou—father!

BERNARDIN (*Cowed, breathless*) Nay! I promise! Nay,  
 I love the girl—and if thou lov'st her too,  
 And Stephen love her not—I know these maids.

GASPARD:

Thou knowest nothing but thy merchandize!  
 There she comes now—thy promise, Bernardin!

BERNARDIN:

Nay, nay, no fear; I keep my promises.  
 I think thou 'rt mad too—but I 'll keep my promise—  
 At least in reason.

(Enter from the back, FLORETTE, closely followed by YVETTE, who watches her anxiously. FLORETTE is walking very slowly, as if dazed, and a little uncertainly. GASPARD stands back, his arms folded, keenly watching BERNARDIN)

BERNARDIN:

Florette! Child!

FLORETTE:

Father!

(Starts towards him, but recoils against YVETTE)

Do not take me home!

BERNARDIN:

Why, hear the runaway! And not one word  
 Of greeting after all these days—one kiss  
 To welcome the old father, come so far  
 To seek thee—

FLORETTE (*Holding him off*) But thou wilt not take me home?

BERNARDIN:

Nay, nay, I 've always left thee free to range.

Why shouldst thou fear me now?

(He turns toward GASPARD)

Where are the ships?

(GASPARD, without speaking, points towards the docks)

Below there? I'll go have a look at them.

(He goes off, towards the water. GASPARD stands silent until BERNARDIN has gone. Then he comes forward)

GASPARD:

Florette! I would not let thy father force thee,

He promised me—but now that he is gone—

Florette! Once more I beg thee—do not go!

YVETTE:

Florette! I beg thee, too! We have walked the roads  
Together—slept and ate and hungered too—

It does not hurt me; nothing ever hurts me,

But thee—thou wast not made to go crusading.

And little Claire—save little Claire for us!

Keep her till we come back—that will be soon—

(Enter MARCEL on the road from the town. He is running and waving a pennon on a long pole)

MARCEL:

Yvette! Yvette! Look yonder at the sun!

The ships will sail! We shall be left behind!

YVETTE:

The sun has yet an hour to go, Marcel.

Was little Claire with thee?

MARCEL:

I left her there,

There with the rest. She said Gaspard would come.

He promised he would carry her to the ships,

To see them sail.

GASPARD:

I promised. I must go.

I'll bring her here. Thou 'lt wait for me, Florette?

It is hard to go!

(Goes off, up the road down which MARCEL has just come. As he goes out, two little children run in, followed by two women. As the children reach MARCEL

*and stretch their hands 'up towards his bright pennon,  
the women overtake them and drag them back)*

FIRST WOMAN:

Here to me, child! I 'll teach thee to run away!

SECOND WOMAN:

Nay, thou canst *not* go with the stranger children!  
Glad I 'll be when they 're gone! I 've had no peace  
Since first they came here, with their flags and their songs.  
Come here to me, I say! Dost want to go  
In the ships and be drowned in the sea? Look at those clouds!  
There 's a big storm coming, and thou 'lt be safe in thy bed,  
While these mad youngsters be tossing about on the waves,  
The great big angry waves.

FIRST WOMAN: And then a big wave  
Will come, bigger than all, and swallow them up,  
Swallow them, flags and children and ships and all!

MARCEL:

Nay, it will never do that! Stephen will never  
Let it do that. Would he, Yvette?—Would he?

YVETTE:

Nay, Marcel! Stephen has all the winds  
Tied in his wallet fast. He loosens the strings  
A little, and lets out just what he needs—no more.

FIRST WOMAN:

Hear the girl, do! She 's a witch! Come away, child!

SECOND WOMAN:

Come! And I 'll take thee up to the little tower  
Where thou shalt watch the ships go sailing out.

FIRST WOMAN:

And be glad thou hast a quiet, snug little bed  
To go to after.

SECOND WOMAN (*Bending over the child, who is pulling her towards  
the right*) What, to the docks? Well, then,  
To the docks. But mind, I 'll tie thee fast to me first,  
I 'll have no runaways.

FIRST WOMAN: Nay, no more will I.

(GASPARD reënters, with CLAIRE in his arms. COLETTE follows a little behind)

SECOND WOMAN:

Look! There comes the sick little one! The one  
That nearly died on the journey. They tell us the boy  
Saved her.

FIRST WOMAN:

Call you that saved? Look at her now!  
Lying back in his arms like an infant!

SECOND WOMAN:

Well—

She's alive. They say she was dead, or the same as dead.

(CLAIRe drops the cross she is holding. COLETTE picks it up and puts it back tenderly into her hand)  
And there! That girl! She's the one could not walk.  
Look at her now! And they say he cured a leper.

FIRST WOMAN:

My boy can walk already. And he's no leper;  
He needs no miracles. He shall stay with me.

SECOND WOMAN:

And mine too.

(To the child, who is dragging her towards the water)

Do not pull so! I am coming!

(They go off, towards the water)

YVETTE (Helping to place CLAIRE beside FLORETTE)

Lie there, beside Florette—and she will care  
For thee, and thou for her, while we are gone.  
Gaspard will care for both.

FLORETTE: Gaspard! Yvette!

I must go too! Why can I not go too?

[Always I hear now singing—singing and bells,  
Far away still, but, oh, so beautiful!  
In Palestine the singing will be near  
And clear—and all the bells will laugh aloud

For joy, and all the little fragrant flowers  
Will blossom over all the holy places—  
Bethlehem—Olivet—and Golgotha—  
And I shall not be there, except in dreams,  
And then the bells, the songs, will die away  
And I shall never hear them any more!  
Dreaming or waking, I shall always hear  
The voice of Stephen calling me to follow.]

(STEPHEN and PIERRE enter from left. PIERRE'S arm  
is thrown over STEPHEN'S shoulder. STEPHEN'S head  
is thrown back. He does not really see the group be-  
fore him. He seems to be gazing at something above  
and beyond them. PIERRE sees everything and is  
wholly alert for action)

PIERRE:

Within the hour they must be aboard.  
I have them all assembled yonder, and  
They call for Stephen! Stephen!

STEPHEN:

I am ready.

PIERRE:

I bade them wait, but they are hard to hold.  
Marcel, go bid them come!

(MARCEL darts off, holding his pennon high. PIERRE,  
smiling, follows the swift, lithe figure with his eyes)

PIERRE:

He's willing!

(PIERRE and STEPHEN come forward so that the little  
group about FLORETTE is between them and GASPARD)

GASPARD:

Stephen!

Look at her!

(STEPHEN'S gaze rests quietly on FLORETTE)

Nay, boy, look at her soul!

(With a mingling of impatience and awe)

I know thee now; thou seest souls, not bodies.  
But we have bodies—hers is done—it fails her—  
Canst thou not see?

PIERRE:

If he could see, he would not be our leader,  
For leaders *do* see souls—that's why they're leaders.  
They lead us, sweeping onward, towards the stars;  
Our bodies follow as they can—or fall—  
Our souls go on, and on, snatch up fresh bodies  
Perhaps, to break and cast aside again.  
My soul could use up twenty such as this,  
His soul, a hundred—hers (*Pointing to CLAIRE*) it hardly needs  
A body at all—

GASPARD: It may not keep it long.

But this (*With a gesture towards FLORETTE*), this lovely thing—  
body and soul,  
One flower of life!—Stephen, release thy hold!  
And give her back to us!

STEPHEN (*In utter, boyish simplicity*) I cannot give  
What I have never held. God gives, withholds,  
Releases. I am a messenger, a voice.  
A child. I do not even fully know  
The meaning of the message that I bring.  
I know that I must carry it—till I fall.

GASPARD:

But she *has* fallen. Look at her, I say!  
Her spirit drags her body after you.  
Stephen! Let me have her! Not to own,  
Not to possess—I've got beyond that now,  
But to protect, to cherish. Bid her stay!

STEPHEN:

I bid her follow where her spirit leads—

GASPARD:

Her spirit follows thee, her body cannot.  
Thy quest is mad—useless, and therefore mad—  
I cannot stop it, and these babes of thine—  
Pitiful, mad, crusading babes of thine—  
They are thine indeed—they will go on and on,

Until the end—and what the end will be  
I know, because I know this world of ours.  
I know that it will open its great jaws,  
And swallow them, and lick its chops, and yawn,  
And sink back, fed and drowsy, and forget  
Even, what 'twas it fed on—

STEPHEN : And I know

That we can walk into the open jaws  
Of Hell itself, if Hell await us there.  
The White Christ leads us—He passed through its fires,  
Enveloped in the clear flame of His love.  
His love surrounds us, and we cannot choose  
But follow—follow—follow where He leads.  
And if He lead through Hell, we follow still.  
We'll fill up Hell with children and with love,  
And there shall be no Hell!

COLETTE : I follow, Stephen !

YVETTE :

We follow, Stephen !

PIERRE : We all follow, Stephen !  
We'll follow thee to Heaven or to Hell  
Or both—we'll make all Hell rock with our singing—

CLAIRE :

I follow, Stephen ! Pierre will carry me,  
At first, and very soon I shall be strong ;  
Stephen will make me strong.

YVETTE (*Kneeling beside her and throwing her arms about her*)

My little Claire,  
Thou canst not follow—thou wilt wait for us,  
Thou—and Florette. Florette will stay with thee.  
Be sure to wait for us; we shall come back,  
So soon, my Claire, and bring thee back sweet flowers,  
Flowers from Olivet, the holy mount.  
They do not fade; those flowers never fade,  
They say, and I will bring them back to thee

And thou shalt hold them close in thy little hands.

Wait for us, Claire; be good, and wait for us.

FLORETTE:

How can I wait? For I must follow, too.

I am strong.

(*She rises, almost falls, but is held by GASPARD*)

Ah, Gaspard! Stephen, make me strong!

I wanted to be strong, Yvette, like thee,

Like Pierre, like all of you—and now, I fail!

GASPARD:

Thou, fail! Speak to her, Stephen, make her see!

Tell her she does not fail!

STEPHEN:

She cannot fail,

For she is filled with love, and love itself

Is victory. I see about her now

Presences strong and holy, guiding her,

Sustaining her, and thee, and me, and all.

I hear the bugles of the heavenly host,

She hears them, and some day thou too shalt hear.

She follows them, and thou shalt follow her.

Go back, Florette, go back and work with us:

Carry the message into all the homes

Of France. Carry it into all the hearts

Of all the little children waiting there.

(*He lays his arm across PIERRE's shoulder. PIERRE*

*throws up his head in an ecstasy of boyish loyalty*)

We go forth, child crusaders, as we must;

She stays, her body fails; ours, too, may fail.

It matters not what shall befall our bodies,

Our spirits go crusading down the ages

Calling to all the children of the world.

And all the children of the world shall hear.

(*He comes forward, his eyes full of vision*)

I see them listening, those far-off children,

I see them thronging—eager—radiant!

Our songs are blowing to them down the wind  
Of time, and faintly up the wind comes back  
Their greeting! They are waiting! We shall join them!  
The children of the world shall save the world!

(*Faintly the singing of the children is heard. It grows in volume as they approach. They enter from the left, led by MARCEL. YVETTE brings CLAIRE to FLORETTE, who stands at one side, half supported by GASPARD. GASPARD gathers the child into his arms. STEPHEN, kneeling, picks up the little wooden cross that CLAIRE has dropped. He holds it high as the children approach, then turns and goes out before them, towards the water. COLETTE, her eyes always on him, follows. FLORETTE, GASPARD and CLAIRE follow also, slowly, in the background. The foreground is filled with the singing children. Many of them bear crosses on tall poles, wreathed in vines and flowers. They pass across and go out, right. Gradually their song dies away in the distance.*)



DUST OF THE ROAD \*

BY

KENNETH SAWYER GOODMAN

\* The Stage Guild, Railway Exchange Building, Chicago, Illinois, 50 cents.  
Production royalty arranged with The Stage Guild.

## CHARACTERS

PETER STEELE.

PRUDENCE STEELE, his wife.

AN OLD MAN, Prudence's uncle.

A TRAMP.

## DUST OF THE ROAD

*The time is about one o'clock of a Christmas morning in the early seventies. The place is the living-room of a comfortable and fairly prosperous Middle Western farmer. At the R as you face the stage is a fireplace with a glowing fire in it. Beside the fire is a large armchair in which PRUDENCE is sitting. At her elbow is a small table with a lighted lamp, having an opaque shade of green tin. At the L is a door giving into other parts of the house; at the back center a door giving outside. There is a larger table at L center near the front of the stage. There is also a lighted lamp on this table, but the back of the stage is in semi-darkness. Near the outside door is a window, the curtains of which are drawn. As the curtain rises the OLD MAN has just shut and bolted the outside door as if shutting some one out. He is only partly dressed and carries a lighted candle in his hand.*

PRUDENCE: Well, what did he say?

OLD MAN: Nothing. He's gone, if that's any comfort to you.

PRUDENCE: It is a comfort to me. I don't like folks coming to the door at this time of night.

OLD MAN: You might have stirred yourself to take a look at him.  
He was that cold I could hear his teeth clatter.

PRUDENCE: What was he like?

OLD MAN: Youngish, I'd say, with thin cheeks and a yellow beard.  
But I never seen such old looking eyes as he had.

PRUDENCE: Go to bed, uncle.

OLD MAN. Both his hands were bandaged. I could see the blood  
on 'em.

PRUDENCE: Well, what of it? We can't be feeding every beggar that comes to the house.

OLD MAN (*At the window*) He ain't turned the willows at the bend of the road. I could holler to him yet.

PRUDENCE: Go back to bed, I tell you, and let me read my Bible till Peter comes in.

OLD MAN (*Going toward the inside door*) You've set me thinking, Prudence Steele. You've set me thinking again.

PRUDENCE: Hush your mouth, and go to bed.

OLD MAN: Aye, aye, that's it! 'To them that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.' If folks only knows enough to keep their mouths shut.

PRUDENCE: Now, you're blaspheming again.

OLD MAN: Maybe I be. But if I was to open my mouth now and tell what I can remember clear as day, would n't I be serving the Lord? Answer me that.

PRUDENCE: Nobody'd believe you.

OLD MAN: I ain't asking 'em to. If you and Peter can disremember what happened in this room, it ain't for me to turn against my own kin.

PRUDENCE: Nothing happened in this room.

OLD MAN: Maybe I never seen thirty one-hundred dollar bills counted out on this table.

PRUDENCE: Go to bed.

OLD MAN: I'm going—I'm going, but it would do me good to see them that's proud pulled down and her that would n't spare a crust for a lame begger on Christmas Eve, losing a piece of money like that as a judgment. It would be as fine a judgment as ever I see in that there book of yours.

(*The OLD MAN goes out chuckling.* PRUDENCE fol-

*lows him to the door, closes it, listens a moment, then blows out the lamp on the larger table and returns to the chair by the fire. She turns the pages of the book and then lays it face down on her knee and puts her hand over her eyes. The whole stage is now nearly dark, the only light coming from the lamp on the small table and from the fire in the grate. The TRAMP opens the outside door and steps into the room. PRUDENCE stirs a little and the book drops from her lap, rousing her. She sits up and listens. The TRAMP closes the door and shoots the bolt)*

PRUDENCE: You're powerful late getting in.

TRAMP: Aye, maybe I am. (*He rattles the door to see if it is fast*)

PRUDENCE: Hush your noise with the bolt, can't you! You'll be having Uncle down here again.

TRAMP: I'll take my chance of that!

PRUDENCE: What's the matter with your voice?

TRAMP: It's the river fog sticking in my throat.

PRUDENCE (*Rising*) Come here and let me look at you. I never heard you speak with that voice before.

TRAMP (*Stepping into the light*) I dare say you never did!

PRUDENCE: God save us! I thought you were my husband.

TRAMP: I gathered as much from your friendly greeting. (*He comes a step nearer*)

PRUDENCE: Stand off or I'll scream! What do you want? Who are you?

TRAMP: What's the need of your knowing?

PRUDENCE: Tell me what you want and get out of my house. You need n't grin at me. I'm not afraid of you!

TRAMP: You're a bold woman!

PRUDENCE: I have cause to be, with a husband leaving me lonesome half the nights of the year, and beggars prowling the dark like rats.

TRAMP: You 've a brave tongue in your head, and a kind voice, like a chilly wind on a tin church steeple. You 'll ask me to sit by your fire next and offer me a sup of something hot.

PRUDENCE: I 'll point you the door you came in by, and set the dog to your coat-tails.

TRAMP: Fine hospitality for the beginning of Christmas Day.

PRUDENCE: Who are you?

TRAMP: Dust of the road, my dear, like any other man. Dust with a spark of fire in it.

PRUDENCE: You 're a tramp, by the looks of you—or worse.

TRAMP: A tramp is it? That 's what you 'd call a gay fellow tramping the hills for the clean joy of sun and air; keen snow in winter and the voice of the birds in the warm season. It 's what you 'd call the lifeless wretches, skulking from doorstep to doorstep for the leavings of other folk's tables. I 'm neither the one sort nor the other, but the name fits me well enough.

PRUDENCE: Whatever you call yourself, you 've got no business in a decent person's house at the middle of the night.

TRAMP (*Taking a pipe from his pocket and filling it*) Is your husband like to be home soon?

PRUDENCE: You 'll hear him at the door any minute now. If you 're thinking of robbery you 'd better be quick about it. There 's little enough to take.

TRAMP (*Lighting his pipe and seating himself on the edge of the larger table*) You can keep your hand off that trinket at your neck and make your mind easy about the spoons. I 'm a disreputable character, a prowler in the night, a betrayer of friend-

ship; I 've none of what you 'd call common decency; I 'd as leave eat your bread and kiss your hand and do you a dirty turn afterward as not, but—well—I 've a different whim. I 'm not here to make you trouble.

PRUDENCE: Fine ideas you 've got! What 'll my husband say when he smells the smoke of your pipe?

TRAMP: You 'll have no call to lie, my dear, though you 've a quick enough wit! I 'm waiting to see him myself when he comes in.

PRUDENCE: Like as not he 'll break your head for your pains.

TRAMP: Aye, like as not.

PRUDENCE: You 've got gall to be sitting there swinging your feet.

TRAMP: I 'm thinking what I 'll say to you in the meantime.

PRUDENCE: You won't be doing much thinking when he 's pounded you till the teeth ache in your jaws.

TRAMP (*In a cold sharp voice and speaking very slowly*) Why did you send that other beggar away just now, Prudence Steele?

PRUDENCE: So you know my name, do you?

TRAMP: Yes! It 's a cruel sounding name, Prudence Steele, and you 've a cruel way of speaking and of looking at a poor man, my dear!

PRUDENCE: You 're a fine hand at a compliment, Mister Tramp.

TRAMP: Why did you send him away?

PRUDENCE: Send who away?

TRAMP: The lame man with the bandages on his hands and feet.

PRUDENCE: What 's that to you?

TRAMP: I was standing in the road. I saw him knock at your door. I saw it open a little. I saw it close again. I saw him go away —just as I 've seen him go from thousands of other doors.

PRUDENCE: He must be a friend of yours.

TRAMP: No. He was one once. Now he's a creditor.

PRUDENCE: By the looks of it, he'll have a hard time getting his money.

TRAMP: Money's easy to find,—sometimes too easy. Now if you'd care to feel in my pockets—(*He jingles coins in his pockets*)

PRUDENCE: Well, pay him then, and keep him from pestering other folks.

TRAMP: One is n't always minded to pay one's debts. And sometimes it's not so easy as you'd think. Only one day of the year I walk the same road with him. I follow him with the money in my hand. I met him at your gate just now and offered it. He turned aside his face. Would you like to see the coins? (*Holding out his hand with coins*) You must. Thirty pieces of silver coined in the Roman mint at Jerusalem.

(*Faint blue light now illuminates the face of the TRAMP and becomes brighter as the scene goes on*)

PRUDENCE (*Fascinated, looking at the money*) You frighten me. What are those stains?

TRAMP: Blood, my dear! It's blood money.

PRUDENCE: Whose blood?

TRAMP: The man's who knocked at your door.

PRUDENCE: What did he want?

TRAMP: He came to give—not to ask.

PRUDENCE: What beggar would be going about the country giving something away?

TRAMP: Yes, Prudence Steele, what beggar would be doing that? It's a riddle for you to read.

PRUDENCE: And I suppose now, you've got something to give me!

TRAMP: Yes, something you won't be likely to take.

PRUDENCE: Huh! Advice, I suppose. That's the cheapest thing I know.

TRAMP: Sit down. (PRUDENCE sits down) Where the man with the wounded hands knocks once, he knocks again. Wherever he's turned away, I find the door unlatched. But open the door to him, and I stand in the road outside,—I'm glad! Oh, I'm a person of strange contradictions—like any other man. You don't understand me.

PRUDENCE: No.

TRAMP: No matter. When he knocks again, let him come in.

PRUDENCE: What do you mean?

TRAMP: Let him come in, I tell you, and save the joy of life in your heart.

(*There is a stamping outside and the door is shaken*)

PETER (*Outside*) Hi! Open the door! Prudence, I say! Wake up and open the door!

PRUDENCE (*Starting and passing her hands across her eyes*) It's Peter. It's my husband.

TRAMP: Open the door for him!

(*PRUDENCE runs to the door and opens it. PETER enters and she clings to him, half hysterical. The TRAMP remains seated on the larger table, but the light fades from his face*)

PRUDENCE: Peter—oh, Peter, Peter!

PETER: What's biting you? Let go my arm, woman! Are you trying to claw the coat off me?

PRUDENCE: Send him away! Send him away! Send him away!

PETER: Take your hands off me.

PRUDENCE: Send him away!

PETER: Send who away?

PRUDENCE: That man! That man over there! I'm afraid of him!

PETER: What man?

PRUDENCE: He came in without knocking. I thought it was you! He's terrible—he's crazy! Look at his eyes! Send him away!

PETER: Go on! Don't be a fool! There's nobody here.

PRUDENCE: Over there! He was standing by the table. The table over there. . . . He's gone!

*(They both move across the room, but the TRAMP has disappeared in the darkness)*

PETER: You've been asleep! You've had a nightmare. You've been worrying again. You'd no call to sit up waiting for me. There's been nobody here.

PRUDENCE: I could have taken my solemn oath! . . .

PETER (*Roughly*) You'll take no oaths except them I tell you to. Go to bed!

PRUDENCE: Where've you been?

PETER: Up to the church. I stayed to a vestry meeting. I walked home slow.

PRUDENCE: You've decided what we're going to do?

PETER: Go to bed and let me think. I'll tell you in the morning.

*(PRUDENCE moves toward the inside door. PETER calls her back)*

PETER: Look here! You'll keep your mouth shut? You'll stick to that?

PRUDENCE: Yes. (*She makes a move as if she were coming back to say something*)

PETER: Get out of here and let me alone. (*He sits down in the chair by the fire and puts his face in his hands.* PRUDENCE goes out. *The TRAMP reappears*)

TRAMP: Well, Peter Steele, is it easy to think of perjury and theft on Christmas morning?

PETER: God! Who's talking to me!

TRAMP: A greater rogue than yourself.

PETER (*Rising*) I see you now, confound you! Where were you hiding when I came in?

TRAMP: No matter!

PETER: So, my wife was n't dreaming, eh!

TRAMP: No more than you are.

PETER: You frightened her, eh! I'll make short work of you. (*He begins rolling up his sleeves*)

TRAMP: I only gave her a little advice.

PETER: Damn you! I'll give you something else! (*He moves toward the TRAMP*)

TRAMP (*Coolly*) Sit down!

PETER: Get out of here with your advice! Get out, I tell you, before I kick you out.

TRAMP (*More harshly but without moving*) Sit down.

PETER: You can't frighten me with your talk. I'm an honest man, I tell you.

TRAMP: So was I once.

PETER: What have you got to do with me, damn you?

TRAMP: 'For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known.'

PETER (*With a sigh of relief*) Oh, I see now. You're only a traveling preacher.

TRAMP: No, but I've traveled much and worn the cloth in my time.

PETER: I'm dashed if I see what you're driving at!

TRAMP: You will presently.

PETER: I won't listen to you.

TRAMP: You know what's coming.

PETER: How should I know what's coming? I'll—I'll—

TRAMP: You'll listen, Peter Steele, because I'm going to tell you something about yourself and you'll know it for the truth.

PETER: If—if some one sent you here to pump me, you'd better be off, or I'll have the law on you both.

TRAMP: You had a friend, Peter Steele, and you loved him. He'd often left his affairs in your hands. You'd served him honestly and he trusted you.

PETER: And why would n't anybody trust me? I've been an honest man, I tell you.

TRAMP: He came to you in this room. It was the spring the war began. He had enlisted a company. Before he left he brought you money, money to keep for his boy.

PETER: It's a lie! I tell you, it's a damned lie! What right's the boy got to think his father gave me money to keep for him? He ain't got a receipt, has he? It ain't shown in the accounts, is it?

TRAMP: No, Peter Steele, the boy can't show a receipt and the entry's not to be found in the accounts.

PETER: By what token do you think a man would be fool enough to leave money lying around loose like that?

TRAMP: By the token that he trusted you.

PETER: I never had it! I tell you I never had it! What do you know about it?

TRAMP: The drums were beating in the road. Your friend was in his captain's uniform. His sword lay on the table by the door; his cloak over the back of that chair. You sat here. He stood across the table from you. Your wife sat where you're sitting now; her uncle over there by the window.

PETER: Who told you all that? What tricks are you trying to play on me?

TRAMP: Your friend laid the money on this table; thirty one-hundred dollar bills. He said to you, "Peter, I want to leave this money with you. In case I don't come back, I'd rather my boy did n't count on anything at all when he makes his start. I've fixed things safe for him till he can earn his keep. This is something extra, a nest egg for him, when he's twenty-one." Then he shook you by the hand. As he went down the path, the drums stopped beating, and when the room was still again you heard the voice of the money!

PETER: God, how did you know that?

TRAMP: Oh, you meant to keep faith, Peter Steele, but you never entered the three thousand dollars in your accounts. Well, he never came back. You read his name in the lists. It set you thinking about the boy and the money. Years went by. The boy began to work and earn his keep. You watched him grow up and wondered if he guessed. Last week, you remembered that your debt fell due on the day after Christmas. Then you sat down to figure interest. You'd used the money well and you tried a just rate. The total startled you. Then you tried three per cent; still too much! Then you sat quiet and the money whispered to you, "Why give me up at all? No one can prove you ever had me."

PETER: And they can't prove it! My wife and her uncle can swear they never saw it paid.

TRAMP: Certainly.

PETER: The boy can't show a receipt.

TRAMP: None!

PETER: No. I don't know who told you all this, but if you're trying to blackmail me, there's the door, and be damned!

TRAMP: I'll not trouble you again, whatever decision you come to.

PETER: Then, what in hell did you come here for? Answer me that!

TRAMP: To advise you to give the boy his money of your own free will.

PETER: Ha! Ha! Anything else?

TRAMP: No.

PETER: Who in the devil are you, stranger?

TRAMP: Come closer!

PETER: I can see you well enough from here.

TRAMP: Come here and look at me. Have you ever seen me before?

PETER: No, thank Heaven! I never have.

TRAMP: Look in my eyes.

(PETER moves toward him as if dazed)

PETER: They're like the eyes of a cat. There's fire in 'em!

TRAMP: Flame from a sunset under Calvary. Look at my throat!

PETER (Shrinking away) I've seen marks like that on a man. . . .

TRAMP: I hanged myself to a dead tree on a stony hillside. Listen!  
(He jingles the money in his pocket)

PETER: It's the sound of money!

TRAMP: Thirty pieces of silver, coined in the Roman mint at Jerusalem; the price of my soul, that's walked the evil edges of the world, for nineteen centuries.

PETER: In God's name, tell me who you are!

TRAMP: The one being that knows best the priceless value of the thing you're so ready to sell,—Judas of Kerioth. (*He advances toward PETER, who sinks into the chair by the fire, cowering away from him*)

PETER: Let me alone, I say! Let me alone!

TRAMP: You'd been an honest man, Peter Steele, and the sun had warmed you and the birds piped to you when you ploughed the fields. You'd looked against the faces of red hills when dawn was new, and strained your eyes across blue valleys at the close of day. And men spoke you fair in the roads and children turned to you as you passed, till a little while ago. What came over you that you'd put the joy of living in pawn for thirty pieces of money?

PETER: Let me be! I've become a hard man; and money's a big thing in the world. What's the piping of birds to me! Leave me alone and let me sell my soul if I like! It's mine to sell!

TRAMP: Aye! It's yours to sell. To sell over and over, if you like. There's money to be got for it, more than the first price you take, and pride, and ease of body, and fear of men! But it isn't only your soul you sell, Peter Steele, and nothing you get will compare with that which goes out of you when the first payment clinks in your hand.

PETER: Let me be! Let me be!

TRAMP: You'll miss the joy of small things crying in the grass, and the pleasant sadness that comes of watching the fall of yellow leaves. You'll take no comfort in the sound of a woman's singing, or the laughing of a child, or the crackling of a fire in the grate.

PETER: I was never a hand at noticing such things.

TRAMP: No, but an honest man shares all the common gifts of God.  
He feels and is grateful without knowing how or why. He  
seldom knows the joy of it all, till he's lost the power of feeling.

PETER: Let me be.

TRAMP: You'll walk the sunshiny roads and have only the dust of  
them in your throat. You'll see little lakes lying in the bosom  
of the hills, like purple wine in cups of green jade, and have  
only the pain of daylight in your eyes. You'll lie down to sleep  
with the crystal stars blinking at you, and have only the empty  
blackness of night in your heart. I know how it will be with  
you, Peter Steele.

PETER: What do you want me to do?

TRAMP: Give up the money of your own free will.

PETER: What interest have you got in seeing me go straight? Whose  
work are you doing?

TRAMP (*Slowly*) It's one thing to die in a splendid agony and save  
the world. It's another to drag the weight of a name like mine  
from century to century; to live on and on, and suffer every pain  
of death; to save a man here and a man there only to balance my  
own long account—to die—to be forgotten.

PETER: To balance your long account?

TRAMP: Turn you from the thing you're about to do, and I toss a  
grain of dust into the scales. There's a heavy weight to be  
balanced, Peter Steele, and it's only one day of the year I'm  
free to search.

PETER: Let me be.

TRAMP: Would you rob me, too?

PETER (*Putting his hands to his head*) Let me think, I tell you!  
Let me think!

(*The inside door opens, and PRUDENCE enters dressed  
in a wrapper and carrying a small lamp. As the light*

*illuminates that side of the room, the glow fades on the TRAMP's face and he disappears. PETER sits with his head in his hands, just as PRUDENCE left him)*

PRUDENCE: Peter, Peter, are you asleep?

PETER (*Starting*) Eh? No.

PRUDENCE: Why have n't you come to bed? It's near daylight.

PETER: I've been thinking, Prudence, I've been thinking.

PRUDENCE: About—about?

PETER: Say it! I've been thinking of perjury and theft on Christmas morning. I've been thinking of selling my soul for thirty pieces of money. (*He rises*) But, thank God, I have n't sold it yet.

PRUDENCE (*Going to him*) Oh, Peter! Peter!

PETER: The boy will get his money on the nail. I'm an honest man, Prue. I'm an honest man, I tell you!

PRUDENCE: Oh, Peter, I'm glad, I'm glad!

PETER: Every penny he'll get and interest. Fair interest!

PRUDENCE: It's a great deal of money, but I'm glad!

PETER: Little enough to give for keeping the joy of living in your heart on Christmas Day.

PRUDENCE: I want to tell you something. I could n't sleep either. Oh, Peter, I could n't sleep.

PETER: You've been thinking of it, too.

PRUDENCE: Not about the money. There was a lame man here just before you came in. I sent him away. It worries me, Peter. I'm sorry I did n't let him in. Uncle saw him. He'd been hurt. His feet and hands were bandaged. I thought . . . I thought perhaps . . . I feel as if he'd stopped somewhere near the house.

PETER: Which way did he go?

PRUDENCE: Toward the willows at the bend of the road.

PETER (*Reaching for his hat and coat*) Like as not he 'd try to shelter himself there. (*He moves towards the outside door*)

PRUDENCE: Where are you going?

PETER: To find him and fetch him back. We can't let him freeze.

(*They go together to the outside door and open it. It is morning outside*)

PETER: It's morning already.

PRUDENCE: Did you ever see such a dawn on the snow?

PETER: Never in my life. (*He kisses her and goes out*)

PRUDENCE (*Calling after him*) I'll have the coffee on the stove.

CURTAIN.

PART IV  
REFERENCE BOOKS



## REFERENCE BOOKS

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